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The Role of Sound Archives  
in Ethnomusicology Today<sup>1</sup>

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This paper discusses the perceived, actual, and potential roles of sound archives in ethnomusicology. Although their numbers are increasing and their holdings are swelling, strong reservations have been voiced about the importance, functioning, and potential of sound archives. These issues must be addressed, not only to clarify the roles of archives in the final decades of the Twentieth Century, but also to clarify the roles ethnomusicologists play in their creation, enhancement, and future directions. Following a discussion of sound archives in general, this paper makes some concrete suggestions that would benefit sound archives, the individuals and groups we record, and ethnomusicology as a whole.

The roles of archives should be of concern not only to ethnomusicologists, but also to those folklorists, anthropologists, and linguists who make sound or video recordings as part of their field research. Field recordings are usually unique and often systematic; their content is unconstrained by commercial markets or paying audiences; their use is unregulated by international copyright law; and they are usually an integral part of a research strategy. Field collections are, therefore, an especially valuable part of any archive. They are also problematic, and raise issues that affect the discipline as a whole in a way that justifies their discussion in an academic journal.<sup>2</sup>

Sound Archives and a Changing Ethnomusicology

Jaap Kunst, Bruno Nettl and Barbara Krader all stress the important role sound archives played in the development of the discipline. Kunst wrote "Ethnomusicology could never have grown into an independent science if the gramophone had not been invented. Only then was it possible to record the musical expressions of foreign peoples objectively . . ." (1959:12). Krader agrees:

Two technical innovations were of great importance to objective scientific research in the new discipline: the invention of the gramophone (1877) and the work of A. J. Ellis, physicist and phonetician

Nettl devotes several pages to sound archives in his *Theory and Method in Ethno-Musicology*. He writes:

The idea of having archives for storing, processing, classifying, and cataloging ethnomusicological recordings has become basic in the field and has led to the development of a special area of knowledge and skill within ethnomusicology. Archives are, in a sense, equivalent to libraries in other disciplines insofar as their importance in research is concerned (1964:17).

Nettl not only notes the importance of archives for storing recordings, he also suggests they had an effect on the development (or lack of development) of ethnomusicological theory as a whole. "The fact that archives have, to a degree, neglected the cultural context of music is perhaps a factor in the relative neglect, until very recently, of this important phase of ethnomusicology" (1964:19).

An interesting contrast to Nettl's equation of archives with libraries in 1964 is his treatment of archives in *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts* (1983). He comments on the number and insularity of archives and goes on:

Most of these archives are of great use to individuals more or less permanently at their institutions. As a group, however, they may possibly not justify all the energy that has gone into putting them together. Many of the recordings they contain are restricted by the collectors and may thus be heard but not fully utilized for research. It may amaze the reader that few recordings (some in Eastern Europe are clearly exceptions) are fully used by anyone other than the collectors. While the archives continue to grow, most scholars in their research rely on their own recordings (Nettl 1983:272).

This is fairly strong indictment from the very person who twenty years before wrote: "the development of archives has been tremendously important" (Nettl 1964:19). In his more recent book, Nettl equates archives with an excessive interest in preservation, especially the preservation of a "pure" and "disappearing" heritage. As we have come to realize that purity is an elusive trait whose pursuit leads quickly to subjectivity and stereotyping, the role of archives as storehouses of tradition naturally diminishes.

Theoretical shifts, foreshadowed in Nettl's remarks on how archives may have impeded the study of music in culture, are also responsible for a change in the role archives are thought to play within ethnomusicology. Whether the analytic framework is to analyze ethno-aesthetics, the ethnography of performance, or the economic, political, or religious aspects of music, the result is that the sounds preserved in archives do not in themselves provide sufficient material to address the issues. Fieldwork has become the norm for ethnomusicological research, and everyone has his or her own tapes. Musical performances are infinite in number, and the research

objective of many scholars is to document and understand the organizing principles underlying the performance of particular examples, which are observed in the field and discussed with the performers and audiences.

Many members of the ethnomusicological community have deposited outstanding collections of liberally documented field collections in one or more sound archives. Some of the most illustrious ethnomusicologists, however, have not yet deposited their field tapes. We are at a moment when a consideration of the role of archives in the field is called for. Perhaps sound archives really are simply the physical residue of an historical period, and further energy should not be wasted on them. Or perhaps, as will be argued below, some perceptions of what sound archives are do not reflect what they actually are, do, and can be.

#### Sound Archives and Ethnomusicology Today

Changes in ethnomusicological approaches to music and changes in the discipline itself have affected the way archives are used and imagined. These changes include the role of transcriptions in analysis (less than previously), the reward system of academic departments (in many cases rewarding only publications and not the time and effort required to organize and deposit good field collection), the vagueness of the United States Internal Revenue Service (the "market value" and therefore tax-deductible worth of field collections in the United States is difficult to determine), the perceived use of archival holdings (limited to preliminary research or posterior verification), and concern about plagiarism. Yet there are other uses of archives, other obligations of ethnomusicologists, and unintended results of the neglect of their collections and of archives that must be considered. This section examines archive use, collection ownership, academic roles, and technology. Each of these is discussed separately, and each raises issues of direct concern to practicing field workers.

#### The Use of Archives

Today, most ethnomusicologists use archives as a resource for preliminary study or posterior generalization rather than as the main source of research data. For example, an ethnomusicologist interested in the ethno-aesthetics of Amazonian song can discover by using an archive whether the Indians in the Amazon sing, and can probably even develop some ideas about song styles to be studied in the field. Few scholars would consider the analysis of only those songs found in archives as anything more than an initial survey. Later, after working in the field discussing the matter with members of a single society, archives can also provide comparative data. If research indicates that a particular singing style is at the heart of the cosmology and social organization of a certain Amazonian group, those findings can be com-

pared with examples of song in linguistically and historically related groups. In both preliminary and posterior analysis, however, archives have a distinctly reduced role in ethnomusicological analysis compared to the role they had in earlier periods.

Scholars are not the only people who use archives, however. They are also used by musicians, students, members of the public interested in a certain part of the world or learning a language, members of the society recorded, and refugees.<sup>3</sup> The very success of ethnomusicologists in bringing world music to the attention of members of their own society has resulted in an increased use of archives by the interested public. Field collections serve all these users better than commercial recordings because they usually provide more material and are closer to the original live performances than most commercial releases. It is ironic that at the very moment the use of archival materials is expanding beyond the confines of the discipline, ethnomusicologists are seriously questioning their utility.

Some former uses of archives have been neglected in recent years. Earlier in the century authors often indicated the item number of the recording they used to prepare their transcriptions, and sometimes the location of the collection itself. This has ceased to be common practice. In recent volumes of *Ethnomusicology* not a single article indicated either the location of the original recordings, or the tape and example number from which the transcription was made. Our field would be far richer if our analyses permitted posterior re-analysis, and debate over the nature of the original recordings themselves, rather than simply our graphic interpretation of them. As we deal in greater and greater detail with ethnographies of performance, we are depriving others of the means by which to evaluate our own work.

No one can predict the ways their collections will be used. Some will become one of the building blocks of cultural and political movements; some will bring alive the voice of a legendary ancestor for an individual; some will stimulate budding musicians, some will soothe the pain of exile, and some will be used for restudies of primary data that may revolutionize approaches to world music. Yet it is certain that archives can serve the fundamental aims of ethnomusicologists, and the aspirations of the peoples recorded, only if the collections are deposited in them in the first place.

### Proprietary Rights and Concerns

Why are collections of some of the most renowned ethnomusicologists not to be found in any archive, but instead gather dust on their shelves? Why is the essential documentation so long in coming for collections that are "temporarily stored" in an archive for safe keeping? The excuse is usually individual and attributed to time. People often tell archivists "I haven't sent you my collection (or the last of the documentation) yet, but I will. I just

can't find the time to do it. You know how it is." This theme and its variations are so often repeated that I am convinced they express a general problem in our institutions and attitudes rather than simply individual responses.

One reason for the delay is that most field researchers consider their tapes to belong to them as individuals. Recorded at considerable expense, often with difficulty and discomfort, some people are reluctant to make their collections easily available to scholars who could use them without experiencing the same difficulties. They may also be concerned lest the results of their collecting be used and published by someone else before they themselves have time to do so.

Such concerns are understandable, but not as a reason for withholding collections from an archive. Almost all archives have contracts that restrict access to a collection for a period of time. Some provide various alternatives for limitations on the use of a given collection. The specific restrictions to be applied are often negotiable, and should be considered for each case, with depositors carefully weighing their own professional use of the materials against the interests of the general public and other scholars. Improper use of a deposited collection is probably extremely rare; productive use of them is far more common.

It might, in fact, be argued that the collector is rarely the sole proprietor of the recordings. The research has usually been done with institutional funding. Early collectors often deposited their recordings along with other ethnographic specimens in the institutions that funded them. Why should not contemporary ones do likewise in an appropriate archive? The performers recorded may also have some claim to their art, and their descendants may legitimately wish to have access to them as well. Recordings kept by collectors are often improperly stored, wound too tightly on warping reels, attacked by mold, and separated from written documentation by termites, rot, and time. They may well not survive to serve any other individual or group.

The objective of archives is to outlive their individual contributors, Academic time runs in fairly short cycles: fifteen weeks to the semester, two semesters to the year, three months to a publication deadline, six years to tenure, three years of administrative responsibilities, changing styles of analysis every few years, then retirement. No professional alive saw the beginning of field recording less than a century ago. In these short cycles the tapes, notes, and photographs generated in field research tend to become means to desired ends.

Seasons, years, careers, and lives end but the principle behind establishing an archive is that the material in it is intended to survive these. Wars, floods, and fires have put the lie to this intention in the past, but the survival of papyrus documents over thousands of years indicates that hope is not

entirely unjustified. Institutional continuity is important if we are to live up to the trust of earlier depositors and serve users in generations yet unborn. Ethnomusicologists must look at the longer cycles as well as the more immediate ones. We should see our work in a perspective beyond that of our academic environments. For there are important political and ethical implications even of what we do *not* do.

### Role: Sound Archives in a Post-Colonial World

Ethnomusicology, and archives themselves, are inextricably part of the colonial period. The establishment of sound archives was part of an epoch that saw the consolidation of the mercantile and political expansion of Europe and the United States throughout the world. Although the motives may have been different in each case, there is no doubt that the material wealth, musical instruments, and recorded sounds of much of the world were accumulated in the Occident. Similarly, the music of the rural poor is preserved by, and largely accessible to, middle-class urban populations.

The people from whose music we have developed our general theories about music-making are not always enthusiastic about the theories we have produced. We ourselves are not even happy with many of them today. But the descendants of the people upon whose recordings the theories were based would often like to obtain the original recordings for their own contemporary social and political uses. Alan Jabbour, Director of the American Folklife center, provides an example. Jabbour begins by citing a talk by Henry Glassie about a visit to a Choctaw community in Philadelphia, Mississippi, where he

noticed an old Bureau of American Ethnology report on the bookshelf. Inquiring, he found that they were enthusiastic about having the report in their community. But they had no more enthusiasm than the present generation of scholars for the volume's turn-of-the-century theories about Choctaw culture. Rather, they were grateful for the carefully described and transcribed ceremonies, which would have been lost but now are being returned.

The documentation, one might say, had outlived the theories for which it had been accumulated, and had been put to cultural uses earlier collectors never imagined (Jabbour 1983).

While the theoretical positions of the scholars of the end of the 19th century are neither used by scholars today nor admired by the natives through whom they were developed, the material the researchers collected, the descriptions they made, and the examples they recorded on early cylinder machines are often still thought important by both the descendants of the people recorded and scholars. The most frequently requested collections in most archives are the earliest ones, recorded on wax cylinders at the turn of the century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Contrary to

every indication in the short time cycles of scholars today, it may be that we will be best remembered for our recordings rather than our laboured theories.

There are a number of reasons patrons request the early collections at the Archives of Traditional Music, in addition to pre-field surveys and post-field comparison. Some groups want to use the recordings to revive an abandoned tradition; some individuals want to hear a deceased relative; some scholars want to discuss the transformation or continuity of a tradition, others want to take issue with a given transcription or analysis. Some researchers can make very good use of old recordings in spite of their relatively poor sound quality. For example, Gerd Fraenkel took copies of M. G. Chandler's cylinder recordings of Winnebago oral traditions back to the field, and they provided a different perspective on Winnebago history (Inman 1984).

Many requests for copies of field collections come from abroad, where national and regional archives are being founded, and nations want to repatriate copies of the collections to the countries in which they were recorded. The Archive and Research Centre in Ethnomusicology (ARCE) in India was established to repatriate recordings of Indian music. Many new archives are being founded abroad, and old ones are receiving more attention from their national governments. Other endeavors are supported by international organizations, including UNESCO and the Organization of American States.

Who, after all, are we ethnomusicologists serving with our research? If our recordings are "raw material" and our journals and books are our finished products, are we not reproducing a colonial pattern in our academic work? Given the price of books and journal subscriptions in third world countries, the pattern is superficially very similar—we collect raw material from less privileged societies and groups, and produce finished industrial products which are quite expensive (although they rarely produce a profit for the researcher). If we keep our field recordings and record collections to ourselves, effectively removing them from public circulation, are we not depriving the other countries of the materials from which they could develop their own ethnomusicological studies?

If collectors have deposited their recordings in archives, and if the archives have attended to the preservation of the recordings, then we can actively reverse the colonial process and help "repatriate" the recordings. Through repatriation and training we can support the aspirations of the groups that were recorded. We can also give other countries the "means of production" of comparative analysis. Unlike artifacts, copies of the recordings are usually satisfactory on all counts. Unlike money, music can be copied without devaluation.

### Archive Technology: Present Image and Future Possibility

It is easy to uncover a negative image of sound archives among colleagues. They are treated as "survivals" from a previous era, and sometimes likened to misers' vaults. This image justifies scholars' decisions to attend to requests for copies of their recordings personally, instead of trying to deal with archives. While it is true that archives do not freely dispense materials, this is usually at the very insistence of the depositor.<sup>5</sup> Even when there is some truth to the accusations of fragmentation, isolation, and insularity of sound archives (noted in Nettl 1983: 272), this is changing rapidly.

The technology of cataloguing is rapidly increasing the availability of information about archives' holdings. The Archives of Traditional Music decided to catalogue all of its acquisitions—including field collections—on the OCLC database.<sup>6</sup> Over 5,000 libraries contribute to this database, and it is easily accessed from libraries that subscribe to ARLIN or other systems. The decision to use OCLC was related to a theoretical stance: sound without documentation is less valuable than sound with documentation, and information about unique field collections should be made available to the largest possible number of patrons. Major ethnomusicological collections are part of the research projects that produced important books or manuscripts. Thus it is better to be part of a large database that includes printed and manuscript materials than to set up a database only for folklore or ethnomusicological recordings. If a person does a search for Frederick Starr it will show the books he wrote, as well as his surviving sound recordings. The terminal indicates where the books and recordings are located. Participating in the OCLC database is part of a general move to make information more widely accessible.<sup>7</sup>

Digital recording technology may also improve the functioning of archives. In a few years most archives will probably be storing copies of their holdings on laser-read discs. Copies of recordings in a digital format can be made without appreciably affecting the signal-to-noise ratio. It will matter much less whether a copy is first, second or third generation. This will mean that there need be no conflict between the communities or nations that were recorded, and the archives, depositors, and other possible users, over whether they have "the original" recording. Copies will be virtually indistinguishable from the original. It should also be far easier to retrieve (and provide copies of) materials that are stored in a digital format. Copies could presumably be made the way files are copied today on microcomputers: quickly, at a keyboard, and sent out the same day. Now it takes the Archives of Traditional Music an average of two hours to copy each hour of original recording; in the future, this copying time could be reduced to seconds.

Easy transmission should be an additional benefit of digital formats.

Digital information can pass over telephone lines or be sent through satellite transmitters. It could soon be possible to send music rapidly from one country to another, eliminating the frustrating waits for slow boats and the disastrous loss materials or accidental erasure of the tapes in transit that so often occur. Since music, print, and photographs can all be preserved in a digital format and recovered in their separate forms, it may eventually be possible to obtain simultaneously documentation about the music and the music itself.

In the near future most sound archives will have equipment for videotape, a medium with several advantages over magnetic sound recording. They will become the centers for research on dance as well as music, and will be even better able to serve the interests of their diverse patrons.

### Research Strategy: The Ethnomusicologist as Part of the Archiving Process

When the field researcher recognizes the importance of depositing his or her collection in an archive, the archiving process begins in the field, not in the archives. Important issues of documentation, recording technique, and ethics can only be addressed by the field researcher.

*Documentation.* All ethnomusicological methodology demands that sound (or video) recordings be clearly identified. Traditionally this includes the answers to the questions "who, what, where, when, by whom" for each item. We call this identification "documentation." The best person to do it is the collector. Documentation is most easily done when the recordings are made, preferably on the tape as well as on paper. It is still not too difficult to do when the field trip is over. It is exceedingly difficult to document a collection after many years, and infernal to document one after the death of the collector. If we are to look toward an age when we can quickly and easily copy sound recordings, it is first essential to know which recordings are which, where they were made, in which language, when and by whom.

*Information* about the recording process itself is also important to future users. It includes "how" (the recording technique), "for what" (the research intent of the recording strategy), and "ethical status" (implied or contractual consent to and restrictions on the recording). These are crucial issues for the posterior use and evaluation of any recording. Only if the field researchers assume the responsibility of providing proper documentation will archives have the information necessary to do their jobs well.

*Recording Technique and Strategies.* While we are all aware of the tremendous role of record producers in popular music, and of the possibilities modern recording laboratories provide for creating songs, sounds, and performances that never existed by mixing tracks, filtering, and adding a bit of this or a bit of that, few people making field recordings today consider

themselves to be producers. Yet every ethnomusicologist who makes a recording is in fact *producing* that recording. No archive preserves sounds. What it preserves are *interpretations* of sounds—interpretations made by the people who did the recordings, and their equipment.

The miniaturization of cassette recorders of relatively high quality has not always improved the quality of field recordings. Simply turning on the recorder will produce "high fidelity." But fidelity to what? The incorrect placement of a microphone may produce a fine recording of foot tapping or motor noise. Decisions of what kind of microphone to use, where it is placed, and how the volume is set all determine what kind of sounds the archive will get and be able to preserve and disseminate.

The issue is not simply one of "good" and "bad" recordings. There is a great deal of interpretation involved in every recording, even (perhaps especially) the "good" ones. Field recordings are, after all, part of an analytic approach to a musical tradition. They may be compromised by the inappropriateness of placing the microphone in the "best" location because it would interfere with the event recorded, or by the inability of the equipment to handle the multiple aspects of a musical event, or by the recorder's choice of recording strategy.<sup>8</sup>

We are all producers. Perhaps there should be an Emmy award for the best produced field collection. At least, all fieldworkers should recognize that they are an integral part of the musical preservation process. Archives are filled with produced sounds that are often undocumented as such. We rarely know how the sounds were produced. We rarely know when a recording was analytic (in the sense of a careful inclusion of certain sounds and the exclusion of others), constrained by circumstances (the microphone could not be in the middle of the dance floor, which might otherwise have been the best place for it), or even whether it is an entire performance or a partial one. Recording strategies should be indicated in the basic documentation if the recordings are to be used knowledgeably.

*Ethical Issues.* Field collections present the collector, the archives, and the users with a number of sensitive ethical challenges. Quite apart from issues of formal copyright, and plagiarism, there are complex issues of who has what kinds of rights to an essentially ephemeral event once it has been fixed on a recording. Ethics in field recordings are shifting sands: what may be perfectly public knowledge at one time may invoke censure or even a death sentence at another.<sup>9</sup> Most sound archives offer depositors a choice of restrictions that range from highly restricted to available to any and all who wish to use the recordings. With hundreds or thousands of collections, an archive cannot be the arbiter of recording ethics. Only the collector can. Ethical issues should be as clearly marked as the content of the individual items.<sup>10</sup>

Entirely unethical recordings, made in secret or against the desire of the group recorded, should probably not be submitted to archives at all. They should not be made in the first place. If there are differences of opinion within the recorded group over restrictions, then only the collector can evaluate the situation.

With new technology it is possible to foresee a day in which a person can discover what collections are available all around the world, and when the archivist can type into a console "copy all of the unrestricted items in collection number X and send to Y" and have the materials made available rapidly and without violating any agreements. This will only be possible, however, when the depositors take the time to assess technical, strategic, and ethical issues in their field research and clearly indicate them in their documentation.

### Conclusions

The image of sound archives and the assessment of their importance in ethnomusicology have changed over the decades. Some of the changes are the results of gradual changes in the theoretical orientation of the field, and in the perceived role of sound recordings in it. There are other changes, however, that are the result of short-sightedness, an inaccurate understanding of the operation of archives, and an unfamiliarity with the possibilities that exist for making materials available in such a way that research is enhanced and the aspirations of the people recorded can be realized. While technology can help make the existence of field recordings more widely known, the adoption of new technologies will be of little use if the collections are not deposited in the first place, the documentation is inadequate, and the material is so highly restricted that little of it is available to the public.

If ethnomusicologists are to enhance the appreciation of world music, then their own collections should be made more available. If we are to reverse the colonialist policy of importing raw materials and exporting finished products, then recordings should be stored where they can be repatriated at a time when members of the group feel they have a need for them. If we want our materials to serve as the basis for further research and analysis, then our original recordings should be available for those ends.

The real issue that all university based ethnomusicologists, folklorists, anthropologists and linguists who make field recordings have to grapple with is this: What is the status of our field collections? Are they important parts of our scholarly lives, production, and responsibilities or are they subsidiary? In granting tenure and evaluating productivity they tend to be considered subsidiary. But should we allow institutions to dictate the priorities

of our discipline, especially when the people we record see things differently?

The considerations outlined in the previous pages, along with the author's experience with archives and research, lead to the following suggestions:

1. The collector should realize that the recording process can be an integral part of the development of theory, the provision of materials to future generations of the group recorded, and the posterior evaluation of his or her analyses.
2. The collector should consider the completed collection to be an important part of his or her total scholarly contribution—a part that may be more important ten, twenty, fifty or one hundred years from now than today's books and articles.
3. The collector should consider him or herself to be a part of the archiving process, involved in the documentation, recording methodology, and ethical issues the archives must face daily.
4. The collector should consider him or herself to be a producer. All field recordings are produced; they are not simply "objective" sounds or events (pace Kunst, above), and their usefulness depends to a great extent upon the collector's reflection on the recording process itself.
5. Collectors should prepare their collections for deposit in an archive as soon as possible after their return from the field. The collection should be completely documented, including information on recording strategy and ethical issues.
6. Depositors should keep their addresses updated, or turn over responsibility for the collection to the archives itself. They should consider the desirability of making part of their collections readily available for consultation, even if they wish to restrict other parts of them for ethical or other reasons. They should remember that archives have users, as well as depositors.
7. Chairs and members of university departments in which field collections are part of research should argue for or provide concrete rewards for the completion of documentation and the deposit of field tapes in an archive. These could include providing summer grants for documentation (not just for field research), treating the documentation and deposit of a collection as the equivalent of a major publication, and other possibilities appropriate to the particular institution and academic discipline.
8. Granting agencies, foundations, and universities should provide funds for the preparation of important field collections for deposit in an archive. A number of major collections by established figures in

the field need urgent attention, and this could be encouraged through small "documentation grants."

9. University programs, departments, and professional societies will need to invest in equipment and personnel if archives are to acquire the technology that will permit increased access and use. Another possibility would be the consolidation of smaller archives.
10. The Society for Ethnomusicology could issue policy statements on the importance of field collections and archives. The society could provide some support to establish a uniform policy with respect to establishing monetary values for collections (for tax purposes in the United States) on what are at once unique collections yet which are practically by definition without market value. It could, through public pronouncements, support departmental rewards for the deposit of collections. The society could also support a movement to establish a policy for rare commercial recordings that would enable greater use of them by members of the discipline. A scholarly society should deal directly with some of the concrete research-related issues facing the discipline and its associated institutions.

Most research in ethnomusicology, anthropology, and folklore today involves the study of symbolic forms in their social contexts, the micro analysis of performance, and the investigation of the part music plays in social and psychological processes. The ephemeral nature of performance and the constant change and transformations of many aspects of social life, among them musical forms and styles, are acknowledged. Yet if we are to admit re-analysis of acts and performances, and if we have an interest in eventually tracing the transformation of musical forms, then archives can be as useful today in reaching these goals as they were in the past for quite different ends.

There is, at present, no clear alternative to archives. No publication can document a long performance, or the entire corpus the author used in developing a theory. Nor can most commercial recordings present more than a part of a performance.<sup>11</sup>

Those ethnomusicologists, folklorists, linguists, and anthropologists who do not place their collections in archives with the care required also have an effect on the future of the discipline. Re-analysis is reduced, repatriation is made more difficult, eventual documentation is weak, the transformation of archives into centers for the preservation and rapid dissemination of materials is impeded.

As a discipline, I believe, we can do better. We can supplement our publications on verbal art with making available sound and video recordings through archives. We can ensure that our agreements with the people we record are honored. We can improve the documentation of and access to

our collections. In so doing, the entire field will benefit, not only today but in the future.

### Biographical Data

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### Notes

1. An archivist by chance rather than training, for the past three years the author has served as Director of the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music, and this paper represents the perspective of a person who has both used archives and worked in them. Many of the ideas in this paper were first sketchily developed in the "Director's Column" of *Resound, A Quarterly of the Archives of Traditional Music*. They benefitted greatly from discussions with Louise Spear, Amy Novick, Mary Russell, Marilyn Graf and Judith Seeger, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

2. This article does not deal with issues of acquisition, access, or use of commercial recordings because these are generally regulated by institutional specialization, accepted library practices, and international law.

3. The overall profile of patrons at the Archives of Traditional Music has changed over the last decade. It is less limited to ethnomusicology students, and includes more members of the local community and non-specialists.

4. There are some exceptions to this generalization, especially with respect to music whose audience is restricted in the originating society. In this case ethical considerations must be paramount over repatriation. Ethics are discussed separately.

Sound archives are in a far better position to meet the demands of increasingly more independent peoples than museums, whose unique ethnographic artifacts are not reproducible. The letter to the Editor of the Sunday New York Times of March 24, 1985, "Curators, Give it Back to the Indians" is typical of the argument: "Much of our culture lies stored, numbered, and exploited for any indirect cash value it might command—most recently \$70 million . . . Give it back to the Indians!" An example of an international conflict is the destination of the Elgin marbles. Cassette copies of old recordings are more usable to most groups than fragile wax cylinders which, after all, are only the medium, not the sound.

5. There is also a time element involved in most restrictions. The contract developed by the Archives of Traditional Music gives the archive discretionary rights over all materials upon the death of the depositor, unless the heirs specifically request other arrangements. So far, this has never been done. As a result, in the long run difficulties with authorization will diminish. Many archives are at an awkward moment in which many of the most desired early collections are unavailable; it will not last.

ington Ethnomusicology Archives is preparing an in-house database. Meetings at the American Folklore Society regularly feature enthusiastic discussions of new methods to automate archival operations. Archives' holdings are already more accessible than was previously possible.

8. An example from the author's research may help clarify the difficulties. In 1981 I was recording a song sung in the midst of a month-long ceremony of the Suyá Indians of Brazil. For several days on end they sang basically the same sequence of songs. In these songs a few men sang a unison song, while the rest shouted, whooped, and made animal and bird cries. On the first day I made a recording standing at mid distance from the singers, using a non-directional microphone. The cries came out as distortion as I attempted to capture the unison song; when I set the volume control to the level of the shouts the song words were inaudible. The second day, at their suggestion, I painted my body, wrapped my arms, knees and ankles, and sang with the men. As I sang I learned how the songs progressed and found that they were performed by a small group of elderly men, while the young men did most of the shouts and cries. I came up with a recording strategy to make a "better" recording of the song series. The third day I used a directional microphone and followed the older singers around, thus eliminating many of the shouts from the recording. Feeling very pleased with myself, I played the recording to the assembled men and women that night. They hated it. "It is so sad" they said, old and young in agreement. "We can't hear the birds; we can't hear the animals. There is no happiness." Here, with all of the best intentions in the world, I had "produced" a recording that neither simply froze the sounds as they occurred, nor adequately captured those sounds considered essential to a Suyá performance of that song. While I made a good analytic recording—I can use it for linguistic transcription—it is not really a recording "as it was." Virtually no recording is. As a check on my own biases, I have also given cassette tape recorders to the Suyá and traded blank tapes for their recorded ones. Their recording strategy is different from my own in instructive ways. We can learn a lot about our respective musicologies from our respective recording strategies.

9. The McCarthy era in the 1950s was a good example of a time when the values attached to certain songs and performers were reformulated in the United States.

10. There are several ways to handle restricted information. Until recently the Archives of Traditional Music has given a single restriction to each collection. Thus, if a depositor wanted to keep something from being copied or even listened to, the entire collection was restricted. Then, when a patron wanted to use a part of the collection, he or she would write to the depositor who might give written authorization for copying all or part of the collection. While this practice protects the individuals recorded and the depositor, it is very slow for the patron. We are adopting a new system, in which each tape of a collection can be restricted separately. Thus access to public performances could be less restricted than access to private performances, while sensitive interviews could be entirely restricted for a number of years.

11. The attempt in the 1970s to provide tapes to document the articles in *Ethnomusicology* was excellent, but short-lived. Perhaps such tapes could be prepared by an archives and made available to interested readers at a cost that would cover expenses.

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## In Memorium Charles L. Boiles (1932-1984)

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On December 17, 1984, a good man died, and some special zest went out of ethnomusicological studies. Even now, it is not easy to write his eulogy. Those of us who were close to Charles have found it difficult to confine his life into a few words. He was complicated on the exterior, but basically simple in his desires.

An inveterate romantic, Charles often talked of death. But to him, it was dramatic, not inevitable. His main joy in life was people—those whom he researched and studied, those few he allowed to become close, and his grandchildren. "People aren't really complicated," he once said to me, "just a little lonely. Love 'em a little, pat 'em on the rump and go on your way. But they'll remember that love pat . . . and that's really all that matters, anyway."

The legendary proportions of his telephone bills indicate the level of involvement Charles had with his colleagues. In particular, he was interested in maintaining close contact with the senior ethnomusicologists. He worked for a number of years on a project intended to document and personalize the experiences and careers of the founders of the field; his motivation came more from a real and personal caring than from any objective, removed scholarly interest.

When Charles and I were typical graduate students at Tulane, we formed a lasting bond. We were "typical" in that, like most graduate students, we were short on money and overflowing with a spirit of adventure. One Christmas, Charles and I decided to go caroling, and chose the faculty for our targets. We found only a few other students who, at first, were willing to be caught up by Charles's enthusiasm and joie de vivre. But as we continued, more and more people joined in the group, research on carols was done, and a Latin American emphasis was selected. The powerful effect of the musical occasion and celebration of Christmas and the Winter Solstice was a valuable and practical learning experience to all of us.

This kind of learning experience was to be typical of his teaching career. Having completed his Ph.D., Charles accepted a teaching position at Indiana University in 1969, and worked at that institution for seven years. During that time, he conducted two field schools in Mexico, continued his research, and instilled courage, confidence, and curiosity in his students. In