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Early Field Recordings: A Catalogue of Cylinder Collections at the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music. Edited by Anthony Seeger and Louise S. Spear. Pp. xviii + 198, bibliography, indexes. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987. $22.50 cloth.

Reviewed by Mary Dart.

The Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University houses a collection of 6,985 wax cylinders recorded between 1893 and 1938, including material from approximately 150 culture groups in Africa, Black America, Native America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. This collection is of tremendous value, containing the earliest recorded material in existence for many of the culture groups represented. (It contains, for example, Erich von Hornbostel's Demonstration Collection of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, the first anthology of traditional music ever issued.) Under the supervision of the editors, Anthony Seeger and Louise S. Spear, these wax cylinders have been recorded onto magnetic tape and their documentation has been painstakingly organized. The result is this fine catalogue which makes these rare materials available to scholars everywhere.

This book begins with an introductory section which describes the history and mechanics of wax

cylinder recording, the significance of these particular recordings, and the challenges facing the fieldworkers who made them. There follows a description of the re-recording project itself, detailing the procedures that were followed and the problems that were encountered by the project staff. An understanding of the technical limitations of the re-recording and the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the documentation puts this information into context for the reader.

The catalogue contains information on each cylinder collection, not on each individual cylinder. It is divided into five different indexes. The first index arranges the collections by their accession numbers and contains detailed information on each. For each collection the following information is given: who made the recording, when, and where; what material is in the collection; how many cylinders are in the collection, and how many strips the cylinders contain; the sound quality of the recordings; the restrictions placed on the use of the collection. This information is arranged with indentations that make the entries very easy to scan. A descriptive paragraph follows, giving additional information in narrative form. The topics covered include the historical background of the collection, sources of the documentation, names of collectors and informants, and the locations of related collections, publications, transcriptions, and supplementary material such as photographs. Gaps and technical problems are described, as well as the particular value of the collection. Contextual information is also provided, such as peculiarities in the announcements or the documentation and interesting anecdotes connected with the collection.

The other four indexes give the investigator further means for locating information. The first index lists the collections arranged by name, including names of collectors, informants,

performers, donors, expeditions, expositions, and recording companies. The second index lists the collections by culture groups, noting alternate spellings. The third index lists the material by subject, including items as diverse as waltzes and throat rattling. The fourth index lists the collections by geographical areas.

To give an idea of the use of these indexes, consider a collection made by Melville Jacobs in 1929-30, listed under accession number 54-185-F. Under the accession number, one can find the detailed information about the collection. In the name index the collection is listed under Melville Jacobs, the collector, and under Mrs. Victoria Howard, the chief informant. In the culture group index the collection is listed under the Clackamas Indians, Klamath Indians, Molala Indians, Kalapuyan Indians, Shasta Indians, and Shoshone Indians. In the subject index there are listings under the categories of every single song recorded in this collection, including such categories as "hand game songs," "Doctors' songs," and "chipmunk power songs." In the geographical index the collection is listed under North America, United States, Oregon, and "unknown locations" within that state. (The term "unknown" is used in this catalogue to mean "unspecified.")

Here, then, is a catalogue that gives access to a tremendous amount of valuable information. It does so concisely, clearly, and as completely as the documentation will permit.