

THE REPRODUCTION OF CYLINDER RECORDINGS

George List

(Continued from the last issue)

The sapphire stylus furnished as standard equipment with the Ediphone or Dictaphone will adequately play back cylinders cut at pitches of 100, 150, and 160 lines per inch. For playback of cylinders cut at a pitch of 200 lines per inch the standard sapphire must be removed and a much smaller one substituted. A cylinder cut at a particular pitch must be played back on a machine equipped with a feed bar machined to accept that particular pitch and no other or the recording will be ruined. It is our practice in the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music to determine the pitch of every set of cylinders before attempting re-recording. This is done by means of a microscope equipped with a special eyepiece for measuring the pitch of cylinders.

The Ediphone and Dictaphone machines are equipped with crystal pickups. Although these machines have not been manufactured for a number of years cartridges can still be purchased from the respective manufacturers. Cylinders are cut by the "hill and dale" process in which reproduction is produced by up and down movements of the stylus rather than by the "lateral" process in which the stylus moves from side to side. Since the latter process is employed in the cutting of almost all modern disks the only electronic cartridges readily available commercially for use in cylinder players are those manufactured for use with the Ediphone and Dictaphone. According to information received by the writer the cylinder playbacks in use at the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress are equipped with custom made heads utilizing the capacitor effect. It is theoretically feasible to adapt a magnetic pickup for use in cylinder reproduction but the writer does not know of a case where this has been done. With the inception of stereo disk recording, in which both "hill and dale" and "lateral" groovings are used simultaneously, the possibility now exists of adapting one of the fine stereo reproducers now on the market for use in the reproduction of cylinder recordings.

The use of amplification in the electronic reproduction of cylinder recordings normally produces a corresponding and disturbing amplification of surface noise. A judicious use of filters will improve the clarity of reproduction. In the Laboratory of the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music the original amplifiers of the cylinder players are by-passed, and the signal is amplified by a Scott Pre-amplifier and recorded on either or both of twin Ampex recorders. A gated filter forms part of the Scott Pre-amplifier package and two sharp cut-off filters—high and low frequency—can be added to the circuit by the use of a patch panel.

Determining the rpm at which to play back cylinders is indeed a vexing problem. On occasion the



Reproducing cylinder recordings in the Recording Laboratory of the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music. The Scott Pre-Amplifier is mounted in the upper right of the patch panel, the sharp cut-off filters in the upper left.

collector may have sounded a pitchpipe 'A', or he may have made a notation as to the rpm at which the recording was made. However, in most cases the transcriber must depend upon his ear and what knowledge he may have of the particular musical style in determining the rpm at which to re-record. Determination of the rpm in playing back speech recordings is somewhat easier since the variation in speed which still permits intelligibility is much smaller.

There was apparently no standardization of the rpm used in cutting cylinder recordings. In his chapter on the music of the Tinguian (Fay-Cooper Cole, *The Tinguian*, Field Museum of Natural History, Pub. 209, Anthropological Series, Vol. XIV, No. 2, Chicago, 1922) Albert Gale notes that the cylinder recorder used by Cole was set at the factory to record at 160 rpm. According to L. D. Norton, Research Consultant for the Dictaphone Corporation (to whom I am indebted for much of the information found in this article), Edison during the early period of manufacture used 80 rpm for speech and 125 rpm for music while Dictaphone early standardized at a speed of 96 rpm. Most machines manufactured had some means of adjusting the speed and a variation in rpm of as much as 20 percent was possible.

Notations as to the rpm at which the cylinders were recorded are found in some of the catalogues accompanying cylinder deposits in the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music. Many of these cylinders were cut upon equipment of foreign manufacture. The ranges found in these notations are given below. No notations are available for cylinders cut at 200 lines per inch.

<u>Pitch at which cut</u>	<u>Range of rpm</u>
160 lines per inch	146-155
150 lines per inch	106-156
100 lines per inch	30-212

(Continued on fourth page)

TWELFTH IFMC CONFERENCE

The Twelfth Annual Conference of the International Folk Music Council will be held in Sinaia, Rumania, August 12-22, 1959. Special activities during the Conference will include a visit to Bucharest to attend the all-country competition of groups of folk dancers and singers and to visit the Institute of Folklore and the Museum of Folk Art, and an expedition to study the living folklore of the Rumanian countryside. For further information apply to Miss Maud Karpeles, Secretary, IFMC, 35 Princess Court, Queensway, London, W. 2, England, or to The Secretariat of the Rumanian National Committee for the XIIth IFMC Conference, Str. N. Beloiannis 25, Bucharest, Rumania.

REPRODUCTIONS OF CYLINDER RECORDINGS (cont.)

The cylinder players in use in the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music are equipped with a variable speed control permitting the reproduction of the full gamut of rpm listed above. The Electronics Division of Indiana University, under the direction of George F. Siddons, has constructed for use in the Archives an electronic drive which permits feeding a variable electrical supply with a range from 45 to 65 cycles into both Ampex recorders. In combination with the three tape speeds available, 15, 7 1/2, and 3 3/4 ips, the cycle patterns of any electrical supply used in the world can be duplicated. Once a tape copy has been made of a cylinder recording any necessary adjustment of the speed can be made by tape to tape dubbing. There is no necessity of re-playing the cylinder.

Cylinders were made of various combinations of virgin waxes, scrap waxes, and metallic soaps. The older cylinders are usually of a brown color. Later a dye was incorporated in the mixture which produced

a glossy black color. Cylinders mildew when stored in warm and damp areas. The surface of the recording should never be touched since the finger marks leave traces in the form of mildew spots. A knocking noise is produced when the reproducer passes over these spots. This may simulate drum beats. Old cylinders often develop a hard surface crust. In some cases the crust or patina disappears with several playings and the recording is improved. Since wax cylinders wear very rapidly they should be re-recorded as soon as possible and should be played back only as often as is absolutely necessary in this process.

Those who wish to re-record cylinders in their possession but who do not have access to equipment permitting closed circuit recording may secure fair results by playing the cylinders on a spring-wound acoustically activated player in a quiet room with the microphone of the tape recorder close to the horn of the cylinder recorder. The electronically operated office dictaphone machines cannot be used for this purpose unless a speaker is improvised since they are provided with earphones only. The reader will find several firms or individuals listed in the classified advertisements accompanying the Music Section of Hobbies Magazine who sell spring operated cylinder players, reproducers and parts, and who will repair cylinder phonographs. In some cases electronic reproducers for use with the spring driven players are also for sale. The writer of course cannot vouch for the quality of these services.

A high quality of reproduction of any cylinder recording requires both specialized equipment and considerable skill. Those who have valuable cylinder recordings which should be reproduced on tape or disk for proper preservation would be best advised to avail themselves of the facilities for this purpose found in several of the larger archives in the United States rather than to attempt this work themselves.



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A joint publication of the Folklore Archives and the Archives of Folk and Primitive Music, Divisions of the Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A. George List, Editor. Richard M. Dorson, Editorial Associate.

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THE FARMERS' MUSEUM FOLKLORE ARCHIVE

Louis C. Jones

This manuscript archive, consisting of eight steel cabinet drawers, is on permanent loan at the Library of the New York State Historical Association and its Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown, New York. The various materials in it were collected by students in courses in American Folklore taught at the New York State College for Teachers, Albany, by Louis C. Jones from the summer of 1940 to the spring of 1946.

These students came from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, some of them living in houses that had belonged to their family for five or six generations and others were emigrés from Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. Many of them were children of first and second generation South and Middle European families.

This course was based on the pattern of the course which had earlier been taught by Harold W. Thompson and following Thompson's lead, I insisted on the student going out into his community and especially into his own family circle to collect as wide a range of folklore materials as possible. A few students, who were not in a position for one reason or another to collect in their families or communities, either did regular research projects or, more particularly, worked on the cataloguing of the archives. As a matter of fact, the whole project would have been impossible without this kind of help. Just over a thousand students contributed to the Archive and while the great majority of them were undergraduates, some were adult teachers taking the course in extension or summer sessions.

The material collected was classified and indexed according to the following general types: child-lore, local legends, supernatural materials, folk song, and folksay (including proverbs, remedies, place-names, agricultural and weather lore).

When the student turned in his paper, it contained

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George List Editor
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a table of contents and a description of the informant, giving name, address, age and personal history. Each item was on a separate sheet of paper with the classification at the top and the student's name and that of the informant entered on the back. Thereafter, the papers were filed according to headings. For example, Ghostlore from all papers was put together. A major file of informant sheets was kept, filed alphabetically by collectors. Since most of the material was collected in New York State, a County file was also kept. Thus, for each particular county, it was possible to determine what types of materials had been collected and the date of their collection.

In 1950 Miss Martha Beckwith, formerly of Vassar College, turned over to me for the Archive all of her New York State notes. On another occasion we acquired all of the papers relating to the folklore collected in the Poughkeepsie area by Harold Nestler.

It is appropriate and fitting that this collection should be at Cooperstown, home of The Farmers' Museum, one of the outstanding folk museums of American rural life. Here also is Fenimore House, where one of the great collections of American folk art is found. Both of these institutions are sponsored by the New York State Historical Association. The manuscript folklore collection thus forms one part of a large socio-historical complex.

THE ARCHIVE OF FOLK SONG (cont).

and for information about scholars who are specialists in certain subjects.

A third group represents the listening public from whom numerous inquiries are answered. Many request the Archive's catalog of folk music.

The Head of the section is also the recommending officer for additions in folklore and folk music to the general collections of the Library.

The Archive of Folk Song in the Library of Congress is unique in that it has the largest and most representative collection in the United States of authentic songs of every type, making it an essential source for comparative studies. Authenticity is the key word to this collection. The informants are folk singers rather than singers of folk song, and through them is preserved for the American people the pure tradition of folk song and instrumental music.

Contributors to This Issue

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folktales ballads legends dances proverbs superstitions chants
 children's games marriage songs myths rhymes folk instruments
 play party lullabies festivals tall tales folk lyrics cures jests

riddles
 instrum
 dreams

THE ARCHIVE OF FOLK SONG IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Rae Korson

(Continued from the last issue)

To make selected material in the collection more widely obtainable, the Music Division has published the permanent recordings listed in a new catalogue. (*Folk Music, A Catalog of Phonograph Records*, issued by the Library of Congress, is obtainable upon remittance of 25 cents to the Recording Laboratory, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D. C.) To date 22 albums containing 5 records each at 78 rpm and 49 long-playing records at 33 1/3 rpm have been issued of authentic and representative folk songs and folk tales.

The Archive's holdings are not classified but are shelved by accession numbers which are arranged chronologically. In addition to the shelflist, this material is accessible through numerical, alphabetical, and geographical card indexes. Extensive field notes and texts are available in bound volumes and are arranged numerically to correspond with the shelflist. In addition to these, four other card indexes analyze the collection in terms of individual units: a numerical file; a title index, arranged alphabetically; an index of informants, also arranged alphabetically; and a geographical index arranged alphabetically by states, and within each state, by town or city. The WPA manuscripts are filed by states and according to subjects.

The issuance of records has been made possible through gifts from private donors and special grants or transfer of funds from the Department of State, the Office of Inter-American Affairs, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1954, a \$25,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation enabled the Archive to press new records. Under this grant 19 LP's have been issued, and ten more are in various stages of preparation.

The collection is built up partially with support of appropriated funds, special grants, and many gifts.

The Archive is located in Room G-156 of the Library's main building. Original master records are

kept in metal containers in the stacks of the Music Division. The physical custody of the records is shared with the Recording Laboratory; its engineers keep the collection in order. The tape collection is housed separately in an air-conditioned room of the Recording Laboratory. The WPA manuscript files take up 13 steel cabinets in the Archive. Two listening rooms are provided—one for visitors who wish to hear records before they purchase them, the other for scholars doing research.

By exchanging its albums of published folk music with other institutions and through the generosity of foreign broadcasting stations, the Library of Congress received a variety of material published elsewhere. Items in the field of folk music and folklore have been received from virtually every country in South America, as well as from Italy, France, England, Scotland, the Near East, and Japan.

The reference service provided by the staff is of varied character. The Archive's first obligation here—like that of the entire Library—is to Congress, whose members often request information relating to the folklore and folk music indigenous to their states.

A large amount of correspondence is maintained with universities, colleges, secondary schools, libraries, museums and similar institutions.

Another important group of inquirers includes scholars, students, authors, publishers, and the motion picture, radio and television industries. Members of this group make their requests either in person or in writing or frequently by telephone. Scholars and students working on extensive research projects make inquiries for books or periodicals that are locally unavailable, for WPA manuscripts that may be micro-filmed on request, for copies of disks or tape of material in the Archive (which the Recording Laboratory prepares for a nominal fee), for specialized bibliographies,

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