

Since 1937 Halpert had been employed by the Works Progress Administration, in the Federal Theater Project, and eventually became Director of the Folklore and Folksong Department of the National Service Bureau. The WPA's

In that summer of 1939, Charles Grant, one of Halpert's finest folksingers, and, as it turned out, an accomplished storyteller, introduced him to the world of Jerry Munyhon, "Cracky" Wainwright, "Old Joe" Britton, and Jesse Johnson,

### Halpert's unique recordings of New Jersey folk music capture a moment before the invasion of mass media weakened the oral tradition of the Pine Barrens.

Joint Committee on Folk Arts and the Library of Congress sponsored a folk music recording expedition in 1939, and chose Halpert to do the actual recording. From March through June he traveled through the states of Virginia, North Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama in "a surplus army ambulance converted into a travelling field station." (Rosenberg, 1980:4) The original recordings made on this trip he deposited in the Library of Congress.

Immediately after completing the southern trip, Halpert went to New Jersey and New York to do further researching. His interest at this time turned to folktales, a result of a question posed by George Herzog, Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University:

When he told Herzog of the folktales he had collected in Tennessee, Herzog asked if his New Jersey informants also told tales. Halpert first responded that they did not, and then realized that he had never asked for tales.

(Rosenberg, 1980:4)

legendary figures of the Pines.

On field trips in 1940, 1941, and 1942, the second sponsored by Indiana University, where Halpert had come to study folklore with Stith Thompson, he continued to collect legends and tall tales. The 1941 recordings in the Archives also include songs and some versions of the famous "Sammy Giberson's Air Tune," played by Ivins McKelvey, who had first told Halpert of the Giberson legend in 1937. The "Air Tune," which some said had come from the devil himself, was "a remarkable tune no one had ever heard before [Giberson] played it." (Halpert, 1947:98)

Halpert's unique recordings of New Jersey folk music capture a moment before the invasion of mass media weakened the oral tradition of the Pine Barrens. His efforts represent the last great collections of authentic folklife of New Jersey.

\*Archives accession numbers Pre '54-217-F through Pre '54-221-F

1. As quoted by Henry C. Beck (see Works Cited). Mrs. Clevenger's father, John Wesley Ford, sang "The Huckleberry Song" for Herbert Halpert in 1941.

#### WORKS CITED

- Beck, Henry C.  
1945 *Jersey Genesis: The Story of the Mullica River*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 143-156.
- Halpert, Herbert  
1939 "Some Ballads and Folk Songs from New Jersey," *Journal of American Folklore*, 52(1939):52-69.
- 1947 "Folktales and Legends from the New Jersey Pines: A Collection and a Study." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of English, Indiana University.
- Rosenberg, Neil V.  
1980 "Herbert Halpert: A Biographical Sketch," in Kenneth S. Goldstein and Neil V. Rosenberg, eds., *Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert: A Festschrift*. (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland), pp. 1-30.

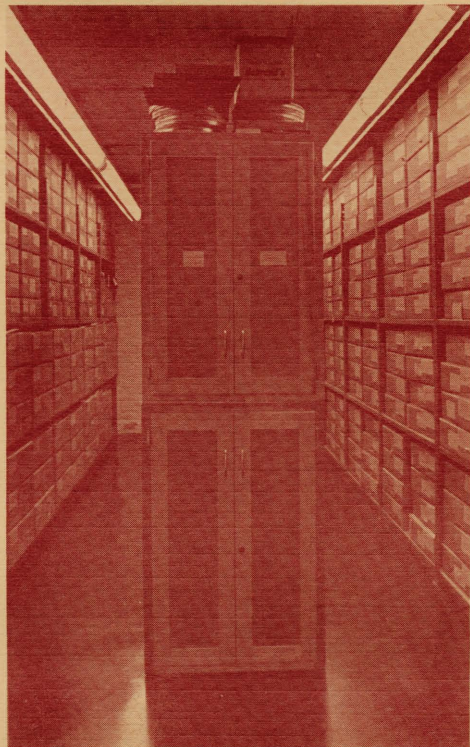
#### SUGGESTED READINGS

- Cohen, David Steven, with Barbara Smith Irwin.  
1982 *Folklife in New Jersey: An Annotated Bibliography*. Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission.
- McPhee, John  
1967, 1968 *The Pine Barrens*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.
- Peel, Bonnie A.  
1980 *The Pine Barrens: A Bibliography*. Research Report Number 4 (March). Trenton: New Jersey State Museum.
- Roberts, Richard, and Richard Speedy.  
1981 "Don't Call It 'The Barrens,'" *Audubon* 83(4):72-83.

Marilyn B. Graf, Archives staff

### The Sound Chest Treasures from the Archives of Traditional Music

Staff members and visitors alike often feel as though the Archives is a sound chest filled with treasures of aural heritage. We at the Archives collect, preserve, and provide access to sound recordings of music and oral data from throughout the world. The recordings represent musical and verbal forms which are perpetuated through the oral tradition rather than through the printed page. We are particularly strong in



Air-conditioned, humidity-controlled, dust-free storage vaults in the Archives of Traditional Music house sound recordings of music and oral data from throughout the world. The vault pictured contains over 7,000 rare and valuable cylinder recordings collected between 1895 and 1938. Other storage vaults hold discs of various sizes, wires, open-reel tapes, and cassettes.

Photo by Verlon L. Stone

recordings from Africa, Afro-America, Asia, Latin America, and Native America. From the United States we also have such genres as ballads, blues, country, gospel, and jazz. From many cultures, there are folktales, oral histories, and interviews. Some of the recordings are, or were at one time, commercially produced. Other recordings were collected in the field by individuals or groups. The present holdings consist of 7,000 cylinders, 50,000 discs, 100 wires, 25,000 open-reel tapes, and 2,000 cassettes.

Earlier issues of *Resound* featured the Bogoras and Jochelson cylinder collection recorded in Siberia in 1900-02, the Natalie Curtis Burlin cylinder collection recorded at the Hampton Institute, a Black college in Virginia, ca. 1917, and the Berthold Laufer cylinder collection recorded in Peking and Shanghai in 1901-02.

Although it is impossible to list all the unique and important collections in the Archives, we would like to briefly mention a few recordings which illus-

trate the variety in our holdings:

The Edward S. Curtis collection contains nearly 300 cylinders of traditional music from Plains, Plateau, Northwest Coast, and Southwest Native American groups. Collected in 1907-12, the recordings represent Curtis' lifelong interest in the games, myths, sacred rites, music, and demography of Native Americans.

The Erich M. von Hornbostel collection is a compilation of recordings selected by von Hornbostel, who was the director of the famous Berlin Phonogramm-Archive from 1905 to 1933. As the earliest anthology of traditional music ever issued, the collection is considered an historical monument in the development of the discipline of ethnomusicology.

The Melville J. and Frances S. Herskovits collection of African and Afro-American music resulted from their expeditions to West Africa, Trinidad, Surinam, and Brazil. Between 1928 and 1942, the Herskovits' cut well over 300 cylinders of religious and secular songs and instrumental music.

The Colonial Publishers collection encompasses 3,000 78 rpm discs of dance, folk, and popular music from the Caribbean and South America. The discs were produced by a variety of record companies between 1940 and 1965.

The Dennis Duerden collection, deposited by the Transcription Centre in London, consists of 199 open-reel tapes of interviews with African authors, performers, political figures, and social leaders. Also included are literary readings and musical performances. The recordings were made between 1956 and 1970.

The Terence R. Bech collection includes 400 open-reel tapes of music and oral data from seventy-five culture groups in Nepal. The tapes, recorded in 1965-70, are accompanied by 3,500 photographic negatives, 7,500 song texts, 200 music transcriptions, 120 musical instruments, 41 life history texts, and a 435-page comprehensive index.

---

*Louise S. Spear, Archives staff*



**Archives of Traditional Music**  
Maxwell Hall 057  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47405

**Non Profit Org.  
Bulk Rate  
US Postage Paid  
Permit No. 2  
Bloomington, Ind.**