

RESOUND

A QUARTERLY OF THE
Archives of Traditional Music

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From the Director

After fourteen years with the Archives of Traditional Music, Louise S. Spear is leaving us to become director of the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive in Los Angeles. Louise, who entered the Archives in 1971 as a cataloger and reference librarian and rose to become associate director in 1981, represents one of the pillars of professionalism, humanity, and dedication at the Archives. She has worked closely and patiently with four directors, many depositors, countless patrons and visitors, and frequent equipment failures and human failings. Louise has been a central figure in many Archives projects and has occupied national offices in several professional societies.

We will all miss her very much, wish her the best of luck, and look forward to some interesting collaboration with the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive in the future. We are very pleased about this new challenge in her professional life, while saddened to see her leave. We have begun a public search for a highly qualified replacement (candidates should write to me), but know that there will never be another Louise Spear. Those of us who have known her were privileged to do so; those who did not will catch a glimpse of her in these excerpts from an interview with me in May.

Interview

What are the things that have changed most during the fourteen years you have worked at the Archives?

Lots of things have changed. For one thing, the Archives collection has grown considerably. We are now collecting many cassette tapes and some videotapes, which we were not doing much of in the early 1970s. We have continued to refine the cataloging system developed by George List, Frank Gillis, and others, to the point that now we are cataloging on OCLC, an international computer data base. The number and kind of users have grown and changed. Graduate students in ethnomusicology and researchers from around the world still use the Archives. But in addition, undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty from many different disciplines use the Archives. Non-academic people also use the Archives quite extensively—some for personal pleasure, some for a special project, and some because of an interest in a particular area of the world. So I would say the number of holdings, the kind of cataloging, and the variety of users have changed through the years.



Photo by Bruce Harrah-Conforth

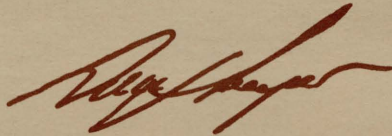
What are the things that have given you the most satisfaction over the years?

That's an easy question to answer. I have enjoyed working with directors George List, Frank Gillis, Ronald Smith, and yourself, as well as with members of the Ethnomusicology Program, secretary Marilyn Graf, and librarians Amy Novick and Mary Russell. The graduate students in the Archives have been wonderful. I am glad I have been able to keep in touch with many of them, even though they have gone to many different places and done a lot of different things. Also, the people who come to use the Archives are very interesting and are appreciative of what we do here. I feel fortunate to have met so many collectors and depositors and to have shared some of their fieldwork experiences. To be a part of an ethnomusicological sound archives that preserves the musical and cultural heritage of peoples of the world is innately satisfying.

What are some of the striking features of the UCLA Archive?

The UCLA Archive is in the middle of a three-year NEH grant for cataloging sound recordings on OCLC and developing a thesaurus for ethnomusicology. They have strong collections of Asian and African music, the Jaap Kunst Collection of periodical articles, and an important collection of written materials in Oriental languages. UCLA faculty and students have an active interest in performing non-Western music and a growing interest in studying ethnic music in the Los Angeles area.

I think that as recording, cataloging, and preservation become more technical and complex, there will be more areas of common interest. And since I know the Archives of Traditional Music so well, I think there will be possibilities for more cooperative work and sharing of expertise and knowledge. It will be good to work together and see what can be accomplished for the mutual benefit of IU, UCLA, and all other archives.



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Songs of an Indiana Island: The Grecophon Record Company of Gary, Indiana

The Florida bayou country is not the first place one would look for music related to northern Indiana. Yet from 1946 through 1954, the Grecophon Record Company of Gary, Indiana produced the seldom recorded Greek island music that had its American roots in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

Research by Tina Bucuvalas and this writer for an exhibition at the William H. Mathers Museum at Indiana University is revealing the missing clues in the strange series of connections between Greek music in Florida and Indiana. The following historical sketch of the Grecophon Record Company offers an example of how a study of an Indiana-based ethnic record label can serve as cultural documentation for a social history of Greeks in Indiana.

In 1984 while in Gary, I happened to ask a regular patron of the city's only Greek coffee shop if he knew anything about the Grecophon record label. The gentleman was Skevos (Steve) Zembellas, an immigrant from the Greek island of Kalymnos and Grecophon's founder and sole owner. "I was crazy for that music," he said, describing his response to the Greek musicians in the coffee shops on the fishing docks of Tarpon Springs.

In the 1930s, the majority of Greeks living in Tarpon Springs were sponge fishermen from Kalymnos and Symni who worked the rich sponge beds of the Gulf of Mexico and the southern Florida Keys. When Steve Zembellas arrived in Tarpon Springs in 1937, the Greek sponge fishing fleet numbered nearly fifteen hundred boats. Ten years later, a red tide, containing deadly microorganisms, swept through the waters, killing the fish and sponges and destroying the Greeks' livelihood in a matter of weeks. Throughout the late 1940s, hundreds of Kalymnians from Florida, in chain migration, moved to the northwestern corner of Indiana. Nearly ninety percent of the Kalymnians now living in Indiana arrived there as a result of the sponge industry's collapse.

The Grecophon Record Company's history reflects this wider background of events. In 1946, Zembellas' love for Greek music led him to buy a Wilcox-Gay portable phonograph, and he recorded the local Greek musicians in the basement of the Saint Nickolas Greek Orthodox Church in Tarpon Springs. Over the next six months, Steve produced private recordings requested by local Greeks who placed their orders at his small storefront record shop. The musicians were paid a dollar a record. Zembellas produced the records, one at a time, and sold them for three dollars each.

As the list of requests grew, Zembellas realized that a vacuum for island music existed, since the big Greek label companies would not take the time to record and release island music commercially. Zembellas then recorded what he still believes to be the best music he ever produced on his Wilcox-Gay machine. With Elias Peronis, Tarpon Springs' finest violinist, and local backup *laouto* (lute) player, Zembellas recorded such traditional island songs as "Panayoti," and Perivolla." He traveled to New York City with eight original celluloid discs and the aim of convincing Tetos Demetriades, the largest manufacturer of Greek records in the country, to release these songs on the Standard Phonograph