Where Are the Parts?

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Back in 1965 I was doing research and found that six regional recorded sound archives didn't know the others existed, so my question to the curator of the media at the Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, was "how do we get these people together to share what they have and know?" The curator, Frank Davis, phoned me and said, "First we have to have a meeting." The meeting took place; we had Kurtz Myers of the Detroit Public Library join us, and decided to organize a national meeting which was held in June of 1965, leading to another in 1966 at Syracuse University, the founding meeting of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections.

At that meeting our main concern was developing methods for letting people what the various collectors and collections had, thus my article in American Record Guide, "Record, Record, Whose Got the Record." I've since written and updated the article "Collectors and Collections" in the Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound, 1993, 2004.

From early technology we were able to see the publications of several large catalogs of collections, and eventually digitization of various library's collections catalogs, and most recently access to them. But this doesn't always get us too some of the oldest recordings, non-commercial field recordings, or even oral history recordings.

One of the newer basic issues for preserving some of this material is finding the mechanical playback equipment. And we know, or should know, there is no particular permanence in any sound preservation method, so in the course of developing methods for preservation, and enhancing the sound, many computer programs, and equipment have been brought forth to help. In fact to hear of all the things used by ARSC members is a bit mind-boggling given that I've not kept up with the area of sound as I had in my youth…although I have used one or two transfer programs for moving from analog to MP3 on the computer. But what about the mechanical needs of playback.

There has been some newer items like optical turntables, and the Memnon/Sony group who use a cylinder machine they developed. http://blogs.iu.edu/mdpi/page/3/ along with other very sophisticated cleaning machines and metadata capture in a building to isolate sound, vibrations, and electrical variations.

Not everyone or every organization has the money to mount such programs. Even the Library of Congress preservation people continue to haunt thrift stores for working equipment.

So, given that many who are searching for a given recording may be able to now find it via catalogs, blogs, listseves, Facebook groups, Twitter groups, and connections via LinkedIn, we are now faced with finding the mechanical means to reproduce the sounds, whether cylinders, Berliners, tape, cassette, wire, Dictaphone, et al.

I know I've found an excellent turntable at a thrift store for a mere $20; a Technics DL B200 but it doesn't have the 78rpm speed setting, although one can manipulate the speeds of the other two, 45rpm and 33.3rpm. My Motown collection is long gone (sold to dealers.) So 45rpm isn't required. I do have some very old various labels of 78s and 33s, and wonder if I should take the time to preserve these with my CD burner. There are now several turntables out which will do this, making the analog material into MP3 tracks without the middle software needed on a computer.

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I've also located several 8mm film cameras which work, along with the rest of the set to splice and edit.

We are more recently, coming to have national or international brokers/exchanges to find and make available the exchange of these things other than eBay or some other selling format on the Internet. But here are some places I've found.

ARSC has this publication, a directory listing of companies and individuals doing or having equipment for preservation: https://www.arsc-audio.org/audiopreservation.html
This PDF directory is searchable with some PDF software like the free Nitro.

The Library of Congress has this excellent site: (not sure of equipment listings) https://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/audio.html and here https://www.loc.gov/pro-grams/national-recording-preservation-board/resources/audio-preservation-bibliography/

Our **U.S. National Archives** has this excellent site: https://www.archives.gov/preser-vation/formats/audio-video-resources along with a directory of suppliers of equipment and software: (dead Link) This links to the **Association of Moving Images Archivists** which is here and updated Quarterly (new link) https://amianet.org/wp-content/uploads/Supplier-Directory-2019.01.pdf

The National Recording Preservation Foundation also has a resources site: http://recordingpreservation.org/links-resources/ this site includes links of many collec-tions, associations, and then further down is a listing of resources with links... some dead.

Although the **Council on Libraries and Information Resources** has a spelled out program for developing a national preservation infrastructure including a directory for sound recording and media, and mentions some of those heavily involved in preser-vation of sound and media: https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub156/section1/ the direc-tory at Cornel University is not available to the public. It requires a login. There is also a good report from Wikipedia about this 'national' plan here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Recording_Preservation_Plan

Still, for those individuals who would like to preserve their collections, find, that finding the equipment to do this easily, and maybe expertly, is one of the main reasons for not doing anything. Our national and regional collections of rare sound (audio), media, film, broad-cast programs, all have often arrived via collectors who loved what they collected, and it would seem, not just to show them where they can find things they enjoy and love, but how they too can preserve them with the mechanical resources necessary. Lots of work is yet to be done in this area. The directory I envision would include more like this. https://vinylcarolina.com/directory/listing/vintage-audio-exchange and this https://vinylcarolina.com/links-resources/