

# Ethnographic Sound Archives Online

*Ethnographic Sound Archives Online* brings together previously unpublished historic audio recordings and their supporting field materials, opening new paths for the study of music in its cultural context.

**The practice of going into the field** to “collect” music dates to the early 20th century, as innovations like the portable phonograph enabled sounds to be recorded on wax cylinders. In response to a growing commercialized music industry, and tied to the Romantic Era notion of disappearing cultures, early field workers such as Frances Densmore and Alan Lomax traveled to remote areas to document and preserve everyday songs and language. By the 1960s, sound collectors began incorporating theories and methods from cultural anthropology – and ethnomusicology as an academic field of study was born.

## Content

Ethnographic Sound Archives Online brings together over 6,000 audio recordings from field expeditions around the world, particularly from the 1960s through the 1980s – the dawn of ethnomusicology as a codified discipline.

Building on their predecessors’ early sound collecting methods, ethnomusicologists began to fill in gaps on the world music map, traveling to field sites to record and document music in its broader cultural context. These collectors’ bodies of work contain some of the most comprehensive surveys of regional music on record, including Mark Slobin’s survey of Afghan music, Nazir Jairazbhoy’s survey of classical Indian music, and Hugh Tracey’s survey of southern and central African music.

## Anthropology Resource Library

- Anthropology Online
- Anthropological Fieldwork Online
- Ethnographic Sound Archives Online
- Ethnographic Video Online Volumes I & II: Foundational Films
- Ethnographic Video Online Volume III: Indigenous Voices
- Ethnographic Video Online Volume IV: Festivals & Archives
- Ethnographic Video Online, Royal Anthropological Institute Teaching Edition

## Curation

Music is tightly woven into society and culture – it accompanies rituals and dances, and fills social spaces. It is the goal of the ethnomusicologist to document sound in this broader context, so field recordings are often accompanied by film footage, photographs, handwritten notes, and records of the larger soundscape. Where possible, the audio in this collection is presented along with its contextual materials, totaling more than 10,000 pages of field notes and 150 hours of film footage, re-creating music’s relationship to its cultural context in a digital space.



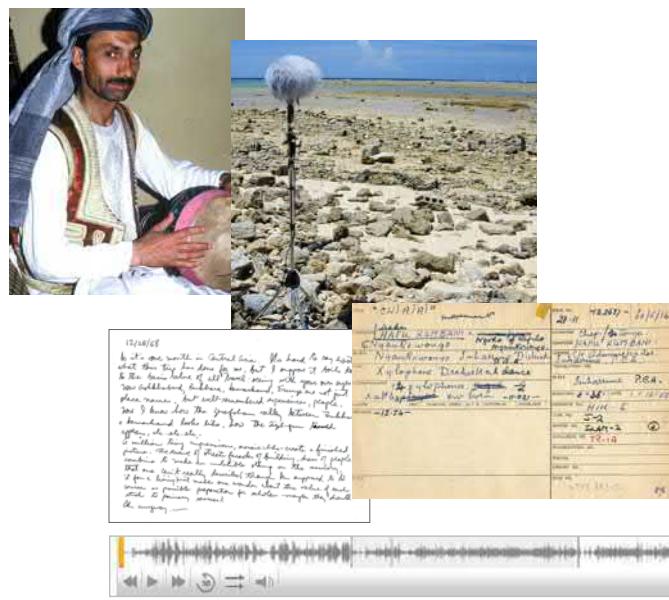
## Archival Collections

• **The Afghan Music Archive** (World Music Archives, Wesleyan University) contains Mark Slobin's original field documentation of the music and culture of the Afghan North in the years prior to the Soviet invasion and anti-musical Taliban takeover.

Curated to include Slobin's comprehensive body of research, *Ethnographic Sound Archives Online* includes field recordings from his survey of music, along with field notes, photographs, film footage and annotations, enabling scholars to recreate the field experience by linking documentation from the same ethnographic event.

• **Okinawa Island Archive** (Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester) is a contemporary archive created by Rupert Cox, Kozo Hiramatsu, Angus Carlyle and other academics in Japan combining ethnomusicological, acoustical, soundscape ecology and sound art audio recordings, materials and approaches. Included in the collection are sounds of the military geography of the US bases in Okinawa, ritual activities at sacred sites, sounds of natural features and wildlife of the landscape, and anthropogenic noise.

• **The Sound of Africa Series** (International Library of African Music, Rhodes University) includes Hugh Tracey's vast survey of music genres and cultures across central and southern Africa. Presented in original finding aid order, each recording is accompanied by Tracey's original handwritten field notes and field data.



## Spotlight: Publishing as Repatriation

• **Walter Garwick Recordings: U.S.A. South Negro Folklore Collection** (Center for Ethnomusicology, Columbia University) is a historically significant repository of African American music and language in the Jim Crow South.

• **Louis Sarno Archive** (Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford) is Louis Sarno's field documentation of the music and cultural landscape of one of the world's last remaining traditional hunter-gatherer societies. It brings together every aspect of music-making, its context in daily life, and the larger soundscapes of the central African rainforest through which it's inextricably woven.



## Digitally Redefining the Archival Research Experience

• **Access:** Archival curation is approached as comprehensively as possible, with the inclusion of full boxes, folders and series where possible. The Alexander Street platform enables users to mimic a live archive research experience in a digital space. Content and metadata are presented in original finding aid order, with box, folder and document organization maintained in digital form. In cases of missing documents, dummy records and metadata will point researchers to the original source.

The screenshot shows a digital interface for a library or archival collection. At the top, there's a header with 'MENU', 'Folder 5: Southern Sotho Songs in ILM Archive (1968)', and 'SIGN IN'. Below the header, there's a search bar and a 'Navigation' sidebar on the right. The main area displays two field cards. The left card is for 'Puo ea Morena Neo Sibi' and includes details like 'Spear by Chief Neo Sibi', '8 pieces.', and 'Chief NEO SIBI'. The right card is for 'Southern Sotho' and includes details like 'Hobeni District, Chief Sibi & Location', 'Mokalakane District - 88 4 5 - 1971', and 'LINK - 27'. At the bottom of the interface, there's a note: 'Puo ea Morena Neo Sibi - Fieldcard' and 'Puo ea Morena Neo Sibi - Recording'.

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