

ARSC))))))))))) Newsletter

Association For Recorded Sound Collections

Number 116 • Winter 2008

ARSC New York Chapter Holds First Meeting

The first-ever meeting of the just-formed New York Chapter of ARSC was held on Thursday January 31st at the 92nd Street Y in New York City. The turnout was fantastic, with over 50 persons in attendance (out of a New York area membership of approximately 125).

The meeting began with very unexpected a surprise visit by Sam Brylawski (outgoing ARSC President) and David Seubert (incoming ARSC President), who just happened to be in the neighborhood and decided to drop by on their way home from work at the University of California Santa Barbara.

After opening remarks by Sam and David, the meeting focused on a round of introductions of all in attendance, the basics of setting up a chapter, and a discussion of what sort of programming the New York Chapter would like to present in the coming months. Presentations of interest to record collectors, sound historians, discographers, audio preservation engineers, and library professionals were proposed and discussed. There was also a report from Tim Brooks on the activities of the ARSC Copyright Committee.

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ARSC Members Among Grammy Award Nominees

Patrick Feaster and David Giovannoni were among the nominees at the 50th Grammy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles, CA on February 10th for their contributions to the Archeophone Records release, *Actionable Offenses: Indecent Phonograph Recordings from the 1890s*. Giovannoni enjoyed two nominations: one with Feaster for Best Liner Notes and a second with partners Meagan Hennessey and Richard Martin, for Best Historical Recording. Giovannoni, Hennessey, and Martin won the latter award in 2007 for *Lost Sounds: Blacks and the Birth of the Recording Industry 1891-1922*, alongside fellow ARSC member Tim Brooks. David Sager was also among the 2008 nominees for Best Album Notes with *Off The Record: The Complete 1923 Jazz Band Recordings*.

On a related note, the Ampex Corporation was honored for Technical Achievement. Among those accepting on behalf of Ampex were former Ampex engineers, Jay McKnight and John Leslie; presenters of a 2008 ARSC Conference paper concerning the history and contributions of Ampex, along with Stanford University Curator for the History of Science and Technology, Henry Lowood.

Brandon Burke (burke@hoover.stanford.edu)

Events

March 26 - 29, 2008. 42nd Annual ARSC Conference, Palo Alto, California. <http://www.arsc-audio.org/>

April 13, 2008. Mechanical Music Extravaganza, Wayne, NJ. <http://www.antique-sound.com/MME/show.html>

April 25, 2008. Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA), Digital Asset Symposium. New York, NY. <http://www.DAS2008.org/>

May 17 - 20, 2008. Audio Engineering Society (AES) 124th Convention, Amsterdam. <http://www.aes.org/events/124/>

July 21 - 28, 2008. XVI International Congress on Archives (ICA), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <http://www.kualalumpur2008.ica.org/>

August 26 - 30, 2008. Society of American Archivists (SAA), Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA. <http://www.archivists.org/conference/>

September 14 - 19, 2008. IASA Conference, Sydney, Australia. <http://www.iasa2008.com/>

September 24 - 29, 2008. Baltic Audiovisual Archival Council (BAAC). Annual Conference, Tartu, Estonia. <http://www.baacouncil.org/>

Please send notices of events to the editor.

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President's Message

This year's dues notices included "opportunities," as professional fundraisers call them, for ARSC members to make contributions to two initiatives -- grants for classical music preservation and ARSC's copyright law reform efforts. I want to tell you more about our copyright work. The Copyright and Fair Use Committee, under Tim Brooks's outstanding leadership, has studied U.S. copyright laws relevant to preservation of historical audio and access to that legacy. The committee identified five copyright issues and made recommendations to solve them. The ARSC Board approved those recommendations in 2005 and is now committed to seeing them implemented into law.

The ARSC Board's five recommendations for changes to copyright law, which are detailed on our website at <http://www.arsc-audio.org/copyright-recommendations.html>, are: placing pre-1972 sound recordings under federal copyright protection; harmonizing the term of coverage for U.S. recordings with that of most other countries (50 to 70 years); legalizing the use of "orphan" recordings (those for which no owner can be identified); providing efficient and legal means to license "abandoned" recordings (those that have been out-of-print for a long period of time); and changing the law to allow preservation of recordings by accepted "best practices."

It's a difficult time in which to attempt to change copyright laws to increase access. Record companies present themselves as under siege and work hard to convince legislators that their business model and bottom line are crucial to the welfare of our country. Yet laws created to protect their rights are impeding our ability to preserve recordings and are holding the great majority of our historical audio hostage. Did you know that under U.S. law an archive or library may not legally copy a recording for preservation until (1) it is actually damaged or in a state of deterioration and (2) another copy cannot be purchased at a "fair" price? It is also illegal to make more than three preservation copies of a recording. (The success of digital preservation is dependent upon multiple, geographically dispersed, backup copies.)

Impediments to access are equally severe. Pre-1972 recordings are protected by state laws until 2067, yet, as Tim Brooks and Steve Smolian's statistical study for the Library of Congress showed, less than 14% of pre-1965 U.S. recordings are made legally accessible by rights holders (i.e., U.S. record companies). Think of it: five out of six pre-'65 titles are virtually inaccessible to us, have been out-of-print for decades, and won't be accessible for nearly 60 more years. And that assumes copyright terms won't be extended yet again.

This winter, the ARSC Board unanimously agreed that our association must take an active role in copyright law reform. We have hired a lobbying firm to promote our views with members of Congress in Washington and help us to develop a strategy to change laws to enable us to properly save our collections. Already, our representatives have met with senior

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ARSC Newsletter

Issue 116 Winter 2008

The ARSC Newsletter is published three times a year, in June, October, and February. Submissions should be addressed to the editor. Submissions by email are encouraged.

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President's Message (Continued from page 2)

Congressional staff from the offices of influential members of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. Three members of the ARSC Executive Board have made our case to attorneys from the RIAA. In the coming weeks, we'll be presenting our case to members of Congress and other government officials. At the end of our three-month contract with our lobbying firm, we'll assess our progress and the ARSC Board will decide what our next steps will be. Stay tuned.

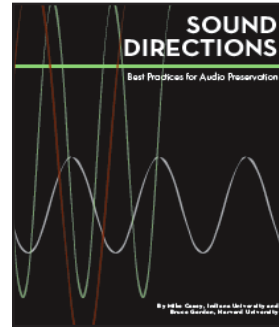
Daily, you can read about copyright controversies over illegal file-sharing and actions taken by record companies and their representatives to stop such actions. We're not in that battle. As an association, we respect the rights of copyright holders. Yet what companies see as important to their welfare may be jeopardizing recordings and, arguably, even those companies. I contend that overreaching by record companies, including fighting to extend copyright terms to longer and longer periods, does great harm to the creative community. As a society, we are losing respect for copyright, and corporate attitudes of entitlement are contributing to that as much as free records from peer-to-peer networks. In fact, ARSC's proposals, while they include a shorter term of copyright for records than desired by record companies, are good for the rights holders. Federal protection of pre-1972 recordings would provide new revenue to record companies; compulsory licensing of protected, out-of-print recordings would encourage small labels to reissue recordings the major record companies are allowing to languish, and would provide those owners with new revenue.

I have been delighted with the response to ARSC's efforts to raise money for preservation and copyright reform. My sincere thanks to the many members who have very generously supplemented their dues with contributions earmarked for these projects. Your generosity will help us get our message across and, hopefully, succeed in our work to reform laws and ensure preservation of and access to our historical aural legacy. This is a tough, but important endeavor, one we can be proud of leading.

Samuel Brylawski, ARSC President
(goodlistening@gmail.com)

Sound Directions Publication

The *Sound Directions* project at Harvard University and Indiana University announces the publication of *Sound Directions: Best Practices for Audio Preservation*, which is available as a PDF from the *Sound Directions* website at



www.dlib.indiana.edu/projects/sounddirections/. This 168-page publication presents the results of two years of research and development funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in the United States. This work was carried out by project and permanent staff at both institutions in consultation with an advisory board of experts in audio engineering, audio preservation, and digital libraries.

Sound Directions: Best Practices for Audio Preservation establishes best practices in many areas where they did not previously exist. This work also explores the testing and use of existing and emerging standards. It includes chapters on personnel and equipment for preservation transfer, digital files, metadata, storage, preservation packages and interchange, and audio preservation systems and workflows. Each chapter is divided into two major parts: a preservation overview that summarizes key concepts for collection managers and curators, followed by a section that presents recommended technical practices for audio engineers, digital librarians, and other technical staff. This latter section includes a detailed look at the inner workings of the audio preservation systems at both Harvard and Indiana.

This first phase of the *Sound Directions* project produced four key results: the publication of our findings and best practices, the development of much needed software tools for audio preservation, the creation or further development of audio preservation systems at each institution, and the preservation of a large number of critically endangered and highly valuable recordings. All of these are detailed in this publication, which provides solid grounding for institutions pursuing audio preservation either in-house or in collaboration with an outside vendor.

For further information on the *Sound Directions* project: soundir@indiana.edu

Mike Casey, Co-Chair, Technical Committee (micasey@indiana.edu)

NDIIPP Recognizes ARSC Member John Spencer

The recorded music industry faces a staggering digital media storage problem, one that will ultimately result in loss of revenue and assets. And this problem has nothing to do with file sharing and copyright; it is caused by the unstructured way in which digital files are managed from artist to label to archive.



An artist used to deliver analog multitrack audiotapes and end-product masters to the label,

accompanied by detailed studio logs that listed information about the recording sessions and song tracks. That process has changed. Today, artists deliver born-digital content on storage media such as CDs, DVDs and hard drives. The source tracks may be incomplete or scattered across different media. Studio logs, if present, might consist of handwritten metadata, which the label will have to manually reenter into its databases.

The obvious short-term goal is to meet shipping deadlines, both physical and electronic. However, once the projects are moved to the vault, there is no guarantee that they can be easily recovered in the future or that the label actually will have all of the individual tracks needed to remix or repurpose the recording.

Over a decade ago, John Spencer, who has been in the music recording business for more than 25 years, began to see the scope of the problem clearly. He has been working since then to help find a solution for this problem. He explains, “With the convergence of technology used in the recorded music industry, professional recording equipment manufacturers going out of business and vaults filling up with disparate carriers, something has to be done.”

John is the president of BMS/Chace – an archival data management and migration service – and an active member of several national audio engineering and recording committees. BMS/Chace is a partner in the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) as part of the Preserving Creative America initiative. John does not side with the artist or the label; he just wants to get the best processes in place to enable all parties to benefit from their creative work. Referring to the music industry’s current digital-preservation efforts, he says, “I would say we provide a layer of triage to new projects;

we’re helping to stop the bleeding. It is time to put some basic tools out there, to organize metadata and files in a structured fashion.”

An early step came in the form of a comprehensive report, published in 2003, titled *Recommendation for Delivery of Recorded Music Projects*. The report was written by the Delivery Specifications Committee, which was formed by members of the Producers & Engineers Wing of the Recording Academy, of which John is a member. The report defined a recommended file format and recommended storage carriers, in support of long-term preservation and sustainability. The report continues to be updated every six months.

The Delivery Specifications Committee, however, cannot predict what will last; it can only track current trends and make its best recommendations. “We keep our fingers on the pulse [of the enterprise IT industry] to determine trends that shape storage best practices,” said John. For example, since the first report was published, a number of proprietary formats have been removed. Music created on obsolete formats must now be migrated to open source files or risk being lost.

The recommendations advise against proprietary hardware and software whenever possible because it is impossible to know how long a company will support that format or even still be in business. John advises, “For future use and practicality, digital preservation files must be vendor-agnostic.”

Another of the committee’s recommendations is to save recorded music in the Broadcast Wave Format (BWF), a well-documented, software-independent nonproprietary WAV file format. This means that, for the foreseeable future, the committee anticipates that BWF files will be playable on most computers and will not require special proprietary software.

One of the most rampant IT problems in the all-digital recording industry is the lack of comprehensive metadata and specifications for how that metadata is coupled to the content. BMS/Chace is researching ways to standardize metadata generation – creative, technical and business-related metadata – to create and maintain key information about a recording throughout its life cycle.

The ideal metadata tool must be unobtrusive and easy to use. The metadata, collected by content creators and users, would be saved in a standardized XML file defined by the BMS/Chace NDIIPP project. Record labels could then use that metadata to streamline the collection and management of their recordings.

John said that the same digital-preservation challenges exist for both small and large music recording companies. “There are distinct parallels between small and large labels, and even small institutional archives. No one currently has an easy way to collect standardized metadata.” But John is relentlessly upbeat about overcoming the challenge, which he says is to “find common ground where creative people can continue to do what they do best, and ultimately hand off these precious assets to the technical folks to preserve for the future.”

Article courtesy of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program Web site (www.digitalpreservation.gov)

UMKC’s Miller Nichols Library Awarded Andrew W. Mellon Grant to Maintain Recording Collection

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Miller Nichols Library has received a \$502,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant will help UMKC maintain and share one of the library’s richest radio collections in its Marr Sound Archives.

“This grant is an honor,” said Sharon Bostick, Ph.D., dean of University Libraries. “We are so proud to have received such a generous first time award from this very prestigious institution.”

While many of history’s radio and music recordings have long disappeared, UMKC’s Marr Sound Archives preserves these historic sounds for future generations.

The Mellon grant will support a cataloging project for the J. David Goldin Collection, which represents a portion of the more than 290,000 unique items that comprise the Marr Sound Archives.

J. David Goldin, a leading authority on historic radio programs, contributed nearly 10,000 items to the Marr Sound Archives. The Goldin Collection consists of 16-inch instantaneous cut acetate discs and pressed recordings – dating from 1935 to 1950 – each 30 minutes in length and produced for broadcast. These delicate recordings are not preserved in any other form or format.

The cataloging project will make the contents of these rare, original sound recordings available for the first time to academic researchers world-wide through on-line catalog access. The project will begin Jan. 1, 2008, and is expected to continue through Dec. 31, 2010.

The upcoming expansion and renovation of Miller Nichols Library will allow for sustained growth of collections, such as the Marr Sound Archives.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City, one of four University of Missouri campuses, is a public university serving more than 14,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. UMKC engages with the community and economy based on a three-part mission: visual and performing arts, health sciences and urban engagement.

Angela Turner, (turnerang@umkc.edu)



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- **May 15, 2008: Deadline to apply for the 2008 archival certification examination**
- **June 1, 2008: Deadline to submit the certification maintenance application**
- **August 27, 2008: The 2008 examination will be held in San Francisco, Buffalo, Nashville, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, and “pick your site” locations around the world**

www.certifiedarchivists.org

Visit our website for forms and to learn how you can hold the examination in your hometown, or contact the ACA office for more information

TAPE Publishes Survey of Audiovisual Collections in Europe

'Tracking the reel world: A survey of audiovisual collections in Europe,' by Edwin Klijn and Yola de Lusenet, presents the results of a study on audiovisual collections undertaken in the framework of the TAPE project. Based on data collected from hundreds of organizations from all over Europe, most of them archives, libraries, museums (and research) institutes that hold audiovisual recordings as minority collections, this is the first extensive report on preservation and access of sound and moving image materials outside the broadcasting sector and large audiovisual archives.

The report shows that a rich diversity of audiovisual materials are held in all types of institutions, but that obstacles in managing them are experienced by many. The study provides estimates on the size of collections, on the presence of specific carriers and their condition. It also presents data on deteriorating materials, obsolete equipment, cataloguing backlogs, and lack of expertise - all problems that are reported frequently.

The report documents how non-specialist institutions employ new technology for preservation and access of audiovisual materials and concludes that uncertainties about the rapidly evolving digital environment make progress hesitant. Valuable and often unique recordings run the risk of being left behind. The promise digitization holds for easy access and survival of endangered materials can be fulfilled only with more support for minority collections in their transition to the digital world.

Ordering information: The report is available in PDF and as a hard copy. Copies can be ordered from the ECPA Secretariat at the address below. Anyone requesting a single copy will receive this free of charge. The report is available as a PDF file at http://www.tape-online.net/docs/tracking_the_reel_world.pdf

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ARSC New York Chapter *(continued from page 1)*

Rather than electing a slate of chapter officers, a steering committee of volunteers was formed to create programming for the remainder of the spring season. Matt Barton of Library of Congress, Marcos Suiero Bal of Columbia University, Joe Patrych of Patrych Sound Studios, Seth Winner of Seth B. Winner Sound Studios, and Dave Nolan of the 92nd Street Y will have the pleasure and privilege of creating programming of interest to the audio archivist community.

The March meeting of the New York Chapter of ARSC will be held on March 20th, and will feature two ARSC members speaking on historic recordings:

Part 1 will feature Seth Winner speaking about CBS engineer Rene Snepvangers, one of the inventors of the long-playing record, and will highlight live recordings that Mr. Snepvangers made on microgroove cut lacquers while he was working at Columbia during the LP's development. Featured recordings will include such artists as Oscar Levant with Dimitri Mitropoulos, Leopold Stokowski, Jennie Tourel, Kathleen Ferrier, Eleanor Steber, Ernest Ansermet, and Seymour Lipkin with Charles Munch.

Part 2 will feature Matthew Barton speaking about Marion Anderson's historic 1939 recital on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial - a key event in the struggle for civil rights in this country. It is rare to hear or see more than a few seconds of it. The first half hour of her performance was broadcast nationally and the March New York ARSC meeting will feature that recording in its entirety.

The New York Chapter hopes to be approved by the ARSC Board of Directors at the 2008 National Conference in Palo Alto, after which we hope to con a slate of officers into being elected and taking on the task of programming chapter meetings for the 2008-2009 season.

*Dave Nolan, Audio Archivist, 92nd Street Y
(arscny@earthlink.com)*

Digital Asset Symposium

AMIA announces the second Digital Asset Symposium. DAS 2008 will be held April 25, 2008 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

As a part of AMIA's commitment to educating professionals about the preservation of our cultural heritage and the protection of our future, DAS 2008 will focus on the lifecycle of a digital audiovisual asset: creation, workflow, and storage requirements. The event offers in-depth information on rapidly advancing technology, with an emphasis on case studies that allows content creators, caretakers and vendors to showcase the realities with which we are all faced. Case studies will be drawn from a mix of studio, broadcasting, national archives, and educational institutions, providing an unusual opportunity to compare approaches in different communities.

Registration information will be available February 15, 2008.

For more information about the 2008 Digital Asset Symposium, visit: www.DAS2008.org

Research Request

Bakersfield Discography

I am well along in compiling a discography of small, independent Bakersfield, Calif., 45 and 78 rpm record labels and their performers, as well as any EPs and LPs. There are still many unaccounted for I am sure. I need exact song titles on the records, performers exact names, label name and catalog number(s). I need a picture or photocopy at minimum. The area covered is from early 1950s (I don't believe any from the 40s exist) up to about 1990. Some labels to look for include: Audan, Bakersfield, Pike, Fire, Hillcrest, Super Sonic, Millie, Tally, Mosrite, Starview, Turquoise, Angela Celeste, Country Sound, Country Town, Grande, Mar-Vel (not the Mar-Vel' in Hammond, Ind.), Wilco, and others. Nearly all of them will have Bakersfield printed on the label ring or elsewhere.

Email me at Bryce Martin (havilahus@yahoo.com). Type Record Research in title of e-mail.

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Call for Papers - BAAC Conference, Tartu, Estonia

Baltic Audiovisual Archival Council (BAAC) announces its 2008 conference "Transformation as Stability: Audiovisual Archives in the Era of New Media," which will be held September 24 - 29, 2008 in Tartu, Estonia. The conference will be hosted by the Estonian Literary Museum and the Estonian National Museum.

BAAC is an organization uniting institutions and individuals concerned with audiovisual heritage about the Baltic States, Scandinavian countries and the worldwide Baltic diaspora. BAAC annual conference (known already as Riga Seminar) takes this year place in Tartu, the historical university town in the southern Estonia.

This year the conference takes a look at the rapidly developing media and the changes it has brought to the audiovisual archives. The new media has turned our world from textual to audiovisual one. In order to ensure their continuous existence audiovisual archives have to change, accept new roles and acquire new skills. Changes have affected the social values, but have they also changed the value systems in the archives?

The topic gives us an opportunity to observe the problems of archiving ever altering forms of digital media, and coping with the constantly growing amount of resource materials. An archive as a symbol of stability and continuity has to combine tradition with innovation. In developing new solutions and renewing the archiving criteria are the archives molding their user or are the users shaping the archives?

The user expectations and the usage practices of audiovisual materials have certainly changed. How those changes have influenced the everyday archival work? Will the analogue material be there only to serve as a guarantee of trust in the future of "intangible archives"? Audiovisual archives today have to preserve fading crafts to providing hi-tech access tomorrow. We hope to look into the digital future not neglecting our analogue heritage.

For survival archives should also look back to changes in the history, how the radical political changes and censorship have influenced their realm.

The deadline of abstracts for papers is 11th of April 2008. Please send abstracts of up to 400 words to: maarja@kirmus.ee

Updates about the conference will be published on BAAC website www.baacouncil.org

Maarja Savan, Baltic Audiovisual Archival Council (maarja@kirmus.ee)

ARSClist

The Online Discussion Group of ARSC

"Ask a question and you'll get answers from some of the best in the business."—
Tim Brooks

Since 1999, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections has sponsored an unmoderated mail reflector to facilitate the exchange of information on sound archives and promote communication among those interested in preserving, documenting, and making accessible the history of recorded sound. The list is sponsored by ARSC as a service to its members and the archival community at large.

Subscribing

To subscribe to the list, send an email message to:

listserv@listserv.loc.gov

Leave the "Subject" blank. In the first line of the body of the message, type "subscribe arsclist [your name]" and send the message normally.

To post to the list, send an email to:

ARSCLIST@loc.gov

Only subscribers can post to the list.

You may also subscribe to the list via the Library of Congress website at <http://listserv.loc.gov/listarch/arsclist.html>

ARSClist Archives

The complete ARSClist archives are kept on the Conservation OnLine (CoOL) site maintained by Stanford University at <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byform/mailling-lists/arsclist/>. Once archived, messages become part of the historical record of discourse in this field and will not be removed from the archives. Current archives are also maintained by the Library of Congress on the above website.

2007 Conference Recordings

Orders are still being accepted for the 2007 ARSC Conference Recording Package. In previous years, you've had to pick and choose among individual presentations furnished on audio CDs, but this year we're pleased to offer all available recordings in mp3 format as a single package on CD-R for \$35, shipping included. Along with the audio, the package also features select supplementary material (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, video).

Please note that not all sessions are included, as some presenters do not want their presentations to be distributed (pending publication, copyright restrictions, etc). A full table of contents is available on ARSC's website www.arsc.audio.org.

Please allow at least 4 weeks for delivery.

NOTICE: All ARSC recordings are protected by copyright. Copies are made only for personal and educational non-profit, non-commercial use. No part may be sold, loaned, copied, or published without the written permission of the speaker. Some sessions may not be available due to contract restrictions.

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If you prefer, you can renew your ARSC membership through the PayPal service at www.paypal.com. Payments can be sent to ARSC's account: payments@arsc-audio.org.

Please specify what the payment is for. If you don't already have an account, note that they are free and there is no charge to send a payment.

Attention Dealers, Suppliers and Publishers

Reach an audience of 1000 collectors, archivists, librarians, engineers and others by advertising your business in the ARSC Newsletter. Display ad rates are \$60 per quarter page, \$100 per half page (vertical or horizontal), and \$150 per full page.

Available discounts include 25% off for advertising agencies, 20% off for two or more consecutive insertions, as well as 20% off for reserving space in the next two 2008 Newsletters ahead of time.

Classified advertising is 30 cents per word, prepaid, with a 22 word minimum. Discounts for multiple insertions apply.

Contact the Advertising Manager Martin Fisher at nipper@infionline.net or 615-315-0611 for more information.

ARSC Newsletter Submission Deadlines

No. 117, Summer 2008 - June 10, 2008 (advertising June 1, 2008)

No. 118, Fall 2008 - October 10, 2008 (advertising, October 1, 2008)

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Dry plate negative from the catalogue of photographs and lantern slides (ca. 1900-1920), part of the G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection.

(Image courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.)