Collaboration Across Communities:
Digitizing Civil Rights Era Black Radio Recordings

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Tennessee Library Association Annual Meeting
March 24, 2011
Glen Ford on *The Historical Importance of Black Radio*:

"New leadership [...] found themselves with a voice on the air through a medium that was speaking directly to their people. Not a general format medium, [...] but Black Radio, that was speaking to your community, and that became a megaphone for our Black conversation that had never existed before.

It unleashed or empowered, a whole new layer, generation of leadership to take on projects that they might have not taken on before...".

The Collection

- 61 7” quarter-inch reel-to-reel audio tapes
- Radio show broadcast on WJBE from 1968-1970
- Originally broadcast and later donated by Avon W. Rollins, Sr., current Executive Director of the Beck Center
- Broadcast speeches by important African-American leaders, local speeches, and in-studio guests speaking on local current events
Audience

- Researchers of:
  - African-American studies & history
  - East Tennessee & Knox County
  - University of Tennessee & Knoxville College
  - Researchers of specific individuals with material in this collection
- General public interested in African-American history of East TN, Civil Rights era
Selected show topics

- Dick Gregory speaking at UTK, 1968
- Stokely Carmichael speaking at Knoxville College
- “The Black Man and Politics in the Presidential Election of 1968”
- 1968 murder of white taxi driver at Knoxville College
- “History of the Black Church and Its Involvement in the Struggle”
- “Uncle Tomism” in Knoxville’s Black police officers
- 1969 UTK student government elections (first African-American student elected)
- History of Black music with live performances
- “The Employment Problems and Conditions in Knoxville Pertaining to the Negro”

- Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Ralph David Abernathy, H. Rap Brown speeches
Process

- **Digitization**
  - audacity import (prioritization of unique local content)
  - soundtrack pro cleanup
  - move files to server space

- **Move to optical media**
  - DVD-R for archival copy (.wav files)
  - CD-R for circulation copies (. files)
  - Copy both sets of files to external hard drive

- **Rehousing of originals**

- **Finding Aid**
Project Issues

- **Copyright**
  - Solved by Section 108 of Title 17 USC: must be made for preservation (must be obsolete media or deteriorating), cannot leave the physical premises.
  - These will be archival and circulation copies for the Beck Center archives and library.

- **Cost**
  - “Free” labor: me!
  - Facilities & Equipment at The Studio at Hodges Library to undertake digitization work and used server space to store files until I need to burn them
  - only cost to Beck Center is supplies, future upkeep, and migration

Note: I am able to get around some of these issues by working in an unofficial capacity, which may not be possible for employees or when wanting to do a formal alliance due to institutional regulations.

2. [http://www.arl.org/preserv/sound_savings_proceedings/Copyright_law_audio_pres.shtml](http://www.arl.org/preserv/sound_savings_proceedings/Copyright_law_audio_pres.shtml)
Working between institutions

My concern:

How do I respect the autonomy of a non-profit institution run by and for people of color, as a white woman coming from a large public institution without a long history of promoting diversity and people of color?

- Respect both institutions’ boundaries and history.
- Listen and learn. Do your research.
Resources

- ARSC (Association for Recorded Sound Collections)
- IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives)
- Library of Congress’s National Recording Preservation Board
- Georgia Harper’s Copyright @ ARL: http://www.arl.org/preserv/sound_savings_proceedings/Copyright_law_audio_pres.shtml
- TAPE’s open reel digitization workflow: http://www.jazzpoparkisto.net/audio/
- Beck Cultural Exchange Center: http://beckcenter.net