

Inventory Number: tta0182w			Center for Popular Music – Audio Log
Media: Uncompressed Digital Audio – DVD			
Title: Wardlow Interview H.C. Speir			NOTES: Original recording on 5" reel of 1/4" tape left channel only by Gayle Dean Wardlow. Audio had severe dropouts all throughout.
Date: May 18, 1968			
Time:			
Place:			
Speir was a talent scout for Paramount, Columbia, and Gennett			Transferred to 10" reel of 1/4" tape – 2 track mono @ 7 1/2 ips by Bruce Nemerov. Audio digitization by Martin Fisher. Historical Consulting and description – Tyler DeWayne Moore.
Time In	Track	Title/Description	Artist or Interviewee
File Name		cpm_94048_tta182w_010101_pres_19680518H.C.Speir	
00.00.00	1	Speir came to Jackson on May 20, 1920; Speir left Sabastopool in 1911, where he was born on October 6,1895; Speir went to school in Harpersville, MS and graduated in 1918; Speir spent two years at Mississippi A&M - now Miss. State; Speir got his start in New Orleans making travel recordings;	H.C. Speir
00.03.24	2	In 1925, Speir bacme active in obtaining talent and did so until 1940; Speir travelled all over the country to find and record talent; Speir claims he was the first man to put a white preacher and black man on record; Speir recorded fiddling and hillbilly bands; Wardlow strokes Speir's ego by telling him he was the best talent scout;	H.C. Speir
00.07.08	3	Speir opened the first record store that could make test records in 1926; In 1935, Speir quit using the record store; Speir had a chance to buy Paramount from Arthur Laibly but could not get the funds; Speir said that Columbia and Okeh - PC Brockman - were in Jackson by 1935; Wardlow asks about recordings at H.C.S. store.	H.C. Speir
00.10.43	4	Speir talks about Charlie Patton writing him a letter to come and record; Speir made a test record for Patton and Brown; Speir says that Tommy Johnson spoke with an impediment; T. Johnson was good but pretty hard to keep sober; T. Johnson conveyed much emotion with his music, when he was not drunk; Charlie Patton and Skip James are also remembered by Speir.	H.C. Speir

00.14.12	5	Speir remembers Ishmon Bracey and Bo "Armenter" Chatmon "Carter"; Bracey was "pretty good" but his records never sold too well; Chatmon was one the best sellers; Speir calls Jim Jackson a dope addict - either cocaine or heroine. Speir recorded in Birmingham, Atlanta, New Orleans, Memphis (Vocalion and Victor), St. Louis, Chicago, Houston, Hattiesburg, Nashville, Dallas, and Grafton, Wisconsin; Speir explains how he found Jim Jackson and sold his contract to Mr. Warren;	H.C. Speir
00.19.02	6	Speir says that, "as a rule the best talent comes from near the Mississippi River in the valley from Chicago to New Orleans; Wardlow asks why the best blues talent came from the Delta; Speir discusses the itinerant nature in the Delta that contributed to placing musicians together on work farms; Speir heard many black musicians during his childhood;	H.C. Speir
00.23.06	7	Speir found Blind Joe [Taggart] near Lake Providence and Blind Roosevelt in McComb City; Wardlow recites lyrics "when you lose your money, you lose your mind; lose your woman, don't mess with mine"; Speir found a preacher, Moses Mason, in Lake Providence; Speir talks about the art of talent scouting; Speir discusses songs he helped write;	H.C. Speir
00.25.29	8	Speir discusses the quality of sound recordings at Victor records and potential reasons for low record sales; Speir discusses recording techniques at Paramount, including acoustic dampening materials; Speir helped Laibly remodel the studio at Grafton for a better recording sound; Speir was reached by Laibly through a contact in St. Louis;	H.C. Speir
00.30.25	9	Speir with with Satherly from Columbia, Don Law, Ralph Peer (Victor), Jack Capp, PC Brockman, WR Callaway, and Laibly from Paramount; Wardlow asks about Skip James Paramount recordings; Paramount sold their masters over to Gennett - issued on Champion; Speir talks about going to Mexico and spending a few days in Clarksdale, MS with Don Law;	H.C. Speir
00.34.33	10	Speir talks about staying in Vicksburg with dope dealers; Speir recorded a woman from Greenwood; Speir found artists all over the Delta and visited Patton at Dockery Farms; Speir remembers Tommy Johnson's Cool Drink of Water Blues; Speir sent more race artists to Columbia and Okeh than Paramount; Speir recalls the Tin Roof Blues by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings;	H.C. Speir

00.40.02	11	Speir discusses recording preachers and how they would sometimes get so worked up that they would pass out in the hot, stuffy recording rooms; Speir also recorded an Indian string band for Satherly of Victor; Speir discusses when Skip James auditioned at his store in Jackson;	H.C. Speir
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