

MOMSR Evolution

In 1964 I began recording professionally. By the late '80's, I sold off the audio and went 100% video. As the internet arrived, I was looking for info on tape recorders. What I found was sparse. So in 1999, I created Reel2ReelTexas.com to provide historical information. In 1999, my wife Chris gave me a 1904 Edison cylinder player. We began tracking sales of recorders and have a data base of over 23,000 records which provide the museum's value.

As eBay had arrived, I decided to reacquire the 15 or so tape recorders I'd used over the years. I found 1970 Roberts 1000, reversible 4 track audio recorder with a B&W video recorder built in. At that point the collection included about 50 tape recorders. The intent was to acquire recorders, mixers and mics that musicians recorded their demos prior to pro studio time. The devices primarily represent machines that were available in the US. I acquired Catalogs from the 1930's until they stopped and most of the magazines..

In 2010, we acquired the 1949 Ampex 200A #33 and an Ampex 300 from the Leo de Gar Kulka estate (San Francisco's Golden State Recorders). The recorder mastered the Champs' Tequila and demoed some of Austin's Asleep At the Wheel's cuts in San Francisco. Kulka charged \$30 an hour for the Ampex 200A 2-track and \$45 per hour for 4 track. When Asleep At The Wheel recorded at Golden State, the 200A had 4 Inovonics solid state amps, instead of the original tube electronics. The Grateful Dead recorded demos and used the space under the assumed name of "The Emergency Crew" (originally the Warlocks), as did Jefferson Airplane and many others. Cher was supposedly their receptionist for awhile according to Kulka's nephew.

Our collection:

- *Ampex - almost all the tape recorders from the 200A up to Teac began building their machines with the Ampex ATR-800 and ATR-700/Teac A-7300. Other Ampex models include a restored 300 with restored amp, 351 with restored transport and amp; 400 with restored amp, AG-500, AG-440s and more.*

- *Archives: John Stephens, the Stephens Electronics Inc., archives provided to us by his brother Rod Stephens. We also acquired the Joe Tall (EditAll) archives and prototypes. The Illinois Institute of Technology offered us Marvin Camrus' personal items, however the University decided to retain them.*

- *Berlant/Concertone colorful and rugged tape recorders.*

- *Califone/Roberts/Akai - We have Akai's first recorders designed by Robert Metzner, founder of Roberts Recorders. Metzner was also known for creating Califone, the AV machines in most schools and universities. In 2012, we interviewed Robert and his wife in Beverly Hills. He was responsible for most of the Akai tape recorder designs from 1953 until the early '70's. Metzner negotiated retaining the North American franchise for his Roberts/Akai recorders until 1972 when his agreement expired and Akai entered the US market. In the '50's Congress allocated 4 billion dollars for educational resources. Rheem (yes the air conditioner company), bought Califone/Roberts Recorder and Metzner stayed on designing machines for Akai, rebranding them as Rheem/Roberts and Rheem Califone.*

- *Magnecord - Dave Boyers donated his Dad's (John Boyers - one of US Magnecord's 5 founders) prototype PT-6 recorder and amp and we are the repository for the Magnecord archives as well.*

- *Sony machines include the first Sony 555 to the Sony APR-5003 and Sony's first wireless mic.*
- *Microphones - over 100 classic microphones. Including a Neumann U48 matched pair with consecutive serial numbers; Altec; Astatic; EV; RCA; Sennheiser; Shure; and Uher. Mixers include: Shure, Sony, Teac and Tascam.*
- *Mitsubishi - the Mitsubishi X-80 ProLogic, razor blade editable, 1/4" stereo, PCM digital reel to reel recorder.*
- *Otari - Otari MX5050 BQII 4 track*
- *StuderReVox – collection includes Willie Studer's first prototype reel tape recorder, from 1949. The Studer/ReVox Dynavox T-26 recorder was created after Studer was frustrated with trying to convert 1947 Brush Development Company BK-401 SoundMirror recorders for the European market. Studer ReVox machines include the Studer A807 with time code. We also have Studer's ReVox line including the complete A-77 recorder with matching amplifier and tuner and other Studer ReVox machines including the Studer B67 and Studer A807 with time code.*
- *Teac/Tascam – We display Teac's first tape recorders, including their Ampex 300 knockoff TD-102 in its original crate, never used. In fact, Teac Japan came to us for photos they could not find in their archives. In return, they profiled us in Japan, Europe and the US. They offered to be a sponsor when a public facility was established. Wish we could have done it. Teac receives the most hits out of all recorders on the web site.*

The collection has many unique items. Lawrence Grover, working for Texas Instruments was the creator of the first transistor

amplifier for a tape recorder using a Viking deck.

The unique thing is that 80% of the recorders are working. They are displayed with the manuals, ads and all interconnected in our studio so they may be readily demonstrated. Our web site not only documents the devices, we profile the manufacturers, have captured histories of significant magnetic recording folks and maintain memorials to those folks. In March, 2018, our web sites received 38,407 visitors and 2,803,321 hits.

In 2012 we founded the non-profit Museum of Magnetic Sound Recording, to create a permanent public museum in Austin, Texas for sound recording technology.

The AES, NARAS (Christine Albert, who chaired the NARAS Foundation Board at the time, supported us), the Texas Music Office and others supported our efforts. Rusty Paul offered to loan us his Dad's 8-track Octopus when our facility was completed.

Just after our non-profit was founded in 2012, the City of Austin was looking for input on their use of an old power plant's intake facility. Our Board scrambled and our Museum won the most votes and comments. There were architectural firms competing with wonderful designs and we could not muster the resources. The attention though, resulted in a good relationship with Margaret Koch, Assistant Director of the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum who met with us several times encouraging and offering recommendations.

We applied for grants. Austin's Bullock Museum considered our collection. When their curator toured the collection, he decided there were not enough items tied to famous musicians. The Bullock went with a permanent display about ACL, ACL Live and

rotating displays from the Grammy and Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame.

In fact rotating displays were a wakeup call for our plans. Our vision, designed by our Board's Architect Lloyd Cates, was a facility with two studios (1930 to 1950 and 1960 to 1980), tied to a performance stage, an audio/hearing demo room, restoration workshop and the collection divided by era. As in our current studio, all the units would be tied to relevant sound sources. Rotation of displays would not give the historical concept we created.

In 2015, the University of Texas' School of Architecture, third year interior design class, developed 13 prototype designs of our proposed museum during the entire semester. Even with that level of development and exposure, we attracted no interest. One student won a \$30,000 scholarship for her design.

In October 2017, our non-profit Museum Board determined a permanent public magnetic recording museum was not viable and it was dissolved, December 31, 2017. So the collection continues privately.

Cheers! Martin Theophilus, co-owner of the Museum of Magnetic sound Recording