

The Arhoolie Foundation



10341 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
www.arhoolie.org
E-mail: info@arhoolie.org





The **ARHOOLIE FOUNDATION** was established in 1995 as a public non-profit educational organization for the purpose of documenting, presenting, preserving and disseminating authentic traditional and regional vernacular music. By our activities we hope to help educate the public, and also support and reinforce traditional community values. In the future we hope to broaden the scope of our activities by attracting wider public support. We plan to do this through a series of benefits, outreach programs, and by creating an interactive website.

The Foundation gratefully accepts gifts, dona-

tions and grants from individuals, businesses, and other foundations to continue our work and expand our activities. All donations are fully tax deductible. We also solicit donations of record collections, photographs, songbooks, broadsides, artists' correspondence, posters, films, instruments, costumes and other related memorabilia to assist the documentation of our country's many and varied musical traditions.

The ARHOOLIE FOUNDATION was classified by the IRS as a charitable and educational organization with a 501(c) (3) status and all contributions are fully tax deductible.

Why Vernacular Music and Cultures Need and Deserve Our Support:

In the history of civilizations, elite cultures have been well supported and relatively well documented. Most current mainstream popular cultures have their own support via the entertainment and communications industries. Vernacular, regional, or local traditions, however, even though they form the roots of many mass popular genres, are on the one hand neglected and even discarded, while on the other exploited and devoured by the dominant mass culture.

Despite neglect and exploitation, local and regional traditions still symbolize and sustain many communities. Each ballad, blues, song, fiddle tune, hymn, or dance form reaffirms communal spirit and builds pride. As these regional traditions honor the past, they also respond to dynamic and constant change - they are never static.

Who guides and leads the ARHOOLIE FOUNDATION?

Although the Foundation shares its name with ARHOOLIE PRODUCTIONS Inc., a for-profit recording company, it is not a successor to the corporation. The Foundation does not control and is not controlled by the Arhoolie Corporation or any other organization.

The Board of Directors:

Chris Strachwitz - *president*
Tom Diamant - *treasurer*
Davia Nelson - *secretary*
John Leopold – University Development Director
Prof. Manuel Peña – professor emeritus
Bill Belmont – record company executive
Wayne Pope – graphic designer & musician
Eugene Rodriguez – Director of Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center (San Pablo, CA)
Joe Wilson – Mgr. of the Blue Ridge Music Center (Galax, VA)
Laurie Lewis - musician
Prof. Archie Green - folklorist
Suzy Thompson – musician

Past board members:

Prof. Guillermo Hernandez †
"Queen" Ida Guillory
Joel Selvin
Alan Govenar

All Arhoolie Foundation Board Members and Directors serve on a volunteer basis.



A word about Chris Strachwitz:

Mr. Strachwitz has pretty much devoted his entire adult life, since arriving in this country as a teenager in 1947, to recording and documenting musical traditions of various subcultures in the USA. He has operated his Arhoolie Record label and the affiliated song publishing firm, Tradition Music Co. since 1960. In the 1970s for about a decade he added the task of record distributing, and today he continues to be the proprietor of the Down Home Music Store in El Cerrito, CA.

Chris has also produced documentary films with Les Blank ("Chulas Fronteras", "Del Mero Corazon", and "J'ai Ete Au Bal" - or "I Went to the Dance") among others. In 1997 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Folk Alliance followed in 2000 by the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC and in 2005 added another Lifetime Achievement Award – this time from ARSC (Association for Recorded Sound Collections).

Some of our accomplishments:

1) Digitizing of the Strachwitz Frontera Collection of Mexican and Mexican American Recordings

Through the inspiration of the late Prof. Guillermo Hernandez of the University of California Los Angeles Chicano Studies Research Center, the Arhoolie Foundation initiated the now-completed digitizing Phase 1 (more than 16,000 - 78rpm discs) of the Strachwitz Frontera Collection. This project was funded by grants from the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts), NARAS (National Association of Recording Arts & Sciences) and the Los Tigres Del Norte Foundation, through the Fund for Folk Culture. We are now well into Phase 2 of this project, digitizing the collection of 45 rpm discs. This has been our biggest project thus far. This collection can be accessed via the UCLA Digital Library website or via www.arhoolie.org.



2) The Image Archive in the Frontera Collection

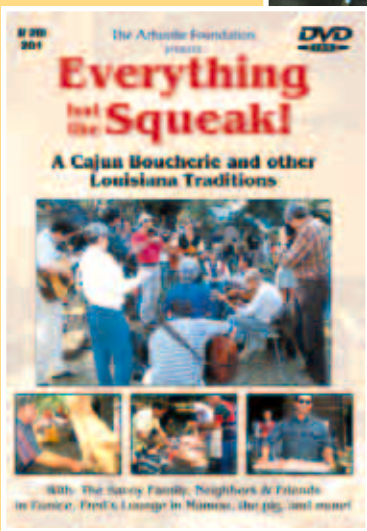
Consisting of over 1100 scanned photos of musicians, record company catalogs, and other historic images related to the recordings in the Frontera Collection, these images were mainly collected by Chris Strachwitz over the years and donated to the Foundation in 2004.

3) Cataloging the Frontera Collection

Our first task was the cataloging of the 78 rpm, 45 rpm, and 33 1/3 rpm discs. This was funded by grants from NARAS (National Association of Recording Arts & Sciences) and the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts).

4) Photography Project: Viva la Charrería Mexicana

This project by photographer Heather Hafleigh, documenting a California family as they prepare for and compete in charreadas, offers a view of a centuries-old living tradition. The photos are available to researchers and community members through the Arhoolie Foundation Archives. They were also included in an exhibit on charrería on display in venues throughout California.



5) Digitizing the Dr. Harry Oster Field Recordings

Thanks to a grant from the Fund for Labor Culture, in 2005 the Arhoolie Foundation was able to digitize and catalog the original field recordings of various local vernacular musical traditions made by the late Prof. Harry Oster in southwest Louisiana in the 1950s and early 1960s.

6) Assisting young film student

The Arhoolie Foundation, through a generous contribution from Ed Littlefield Jr., Julia Derby, and the Sage Foundation, was able to assist Wilson Savoy in increasing his skills as director, cinematographer and editor for several short film projects about Louisiana musicians and cultural traditions.

7) The Sacred Steel Instrument Fund

Through donations from individuals and companies, we were able to provide instruments to talented musicians from the African-American sacred steel guitar tradition to hone and continue their work in several of these Holiness denominations.

8) Film/DVD: "Sacred Steel"

In cooperation with Documentary Arts, Inc. of Dallas Texas we produced this documentary film under the direction of Robert Stone. The film shows the development and use of the steel guitar to assist the services and lead the "praise music" in the House Of God denomination of the Holiness - Pentecostal churches. AFDVD #203

9) Film/DVD: "Everything But The Squeak" (A Cajun Boucherie and other Louisiana Traditions)

In conjunction with Documentary Arts, Inc. of Dallas, Texas. This film, directed by Alan Govenar, with Chris Strachwitz as executive producer, documents a Cajun country "boucherie" (butchering of a hog and eating it!) among other Cajun/Creole traditions in the Eunice, La. area, and features a lot of music. AFDVD # 201

10) Film/DVD: "Robert 'Red' Alexander"

The Arhoolie Foundation produced this documentary film, directed by Chris Simon, about a shipwright and folk artist who builds miniature ships in bottles among other projects. This film was funded by Archie Green and the local shipwright union. AFDVD #202

11) Documenting and cataloging the Mexican PEERLESS label

Peerless was Mexico's first commercial, but totally undocumented, record label. The Arhoolie Foundation undertook the cataloging and documenting of the firm's output from its inception in the late 1920s through 1955 or the end of the 78 rpm format. The work was done in Mexico City at the company's offices with the full cooperation of its staff and director.

12) Distributing 500 free copies of "Corridos y Tragedias De La Frontera"

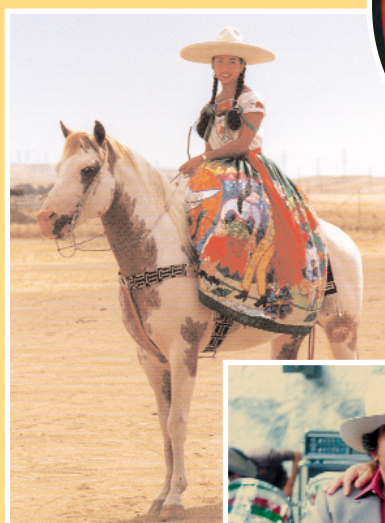
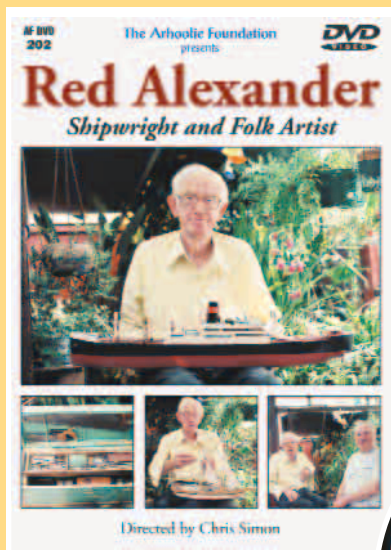
These 2-CD sets were distributed to public libraries in the greater Southwest thanks to a grant from the Rex Foundation. This collection includes the first recordings of important Mexican-Texas border ballads.

13) International Conferences on the Corrido

These conferences have been held primarily due to the determined and persistent efforts of the late Prof. Guillermo Hernandez, one of the Arhoolie Foundation's founding board members. The first Congreso Internacional del Corrido was held in 1992 in Monterrey, N.L. Mexico and subsequent events have taken place at UCLA, UT Austin, Mexico City, and most recently at UC Santa Barbara. This most recent event was in honor and memory of Prof. Hernandez and was primarily sponsored by the Arhoolie Foundation.

14) Film/DVD: "El Mundo del Corrido de Guillermo Hernandez"

In connection with the 6th Corrido Conference, which was held in memory of the late Prof. Guillermo Hernandez, the Arhoolie Foundation sponsored this one hour film/DVD, edited by Maureen Gosling, but it has not been released to the public. If interested, we will send you a copy of this DVD upon receipt of a generous donation.



UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center has commissioned journalist Agustin Gurza to write a book on the Frontera Collection.

Pitched at a general audience, but also designed for convenient use in college and high school classrooms, Gurza's book will combine a description and analysis of the collection itself with the broad cultural context surrounding this often under-valued and under-studied music. In addition to its main essay, the book will present segments on major figures in the music, translations of key songs, a graphic map of significant music centers along the US-Mexico border, and a user's guide for UCLA's digital catalog of the Strachwitz Frontera Collection.

Agustin Gurza, The Frontera Collection: the Arhoolie Foundation's Strachwitz Frontera Collection of Mexican and Mexican-American Recordings. The Chicano Archives, volume 4. Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2009.

Current Projects:

1) Creating a virtual Encyclopedia of the Frontera Collection

The Arhoolie Foundation will soon debut its online Encyclopedia of the Frontera Collection by making the complete catalog of our archive searchable on our website. This will be a user-friendly, graphically rich website featuring the complete catalog of over 130,000 individual recordings of Mexican and Mexican American music as well as over 1500 photographs of musicians, images of 78 RPM record sleeves, record company catalogs, etc.

For this particular project we urgently need financial support!

2) Film: The Kenny Hall Project

The National Endowment for the Arts, the California Traditional Arts Advancement Program, the Sage Foundation, the Arhoolie Foundation, and the Fresno Folklore Society have funded this film about Kenny Hall. Directed by Chris Simon, the film documents the music and life of this 80-year-old blind fiddler, mandolin player, unique singer, and storyteller who has influenced many old-time traditionalists. Project is scheduled to be finished early in 2009.

3) Film: The New Lost City Ramblers: "Always Been A Rambler"

Directed by Yasha Aginsky, this film "Always Been A Rambler" is about the life and times of the New Lost City Ramblers. This premier old-time folk group has brought authentic old-time and mountain music to urban and rural audiences since the 1950s. Funding has come from individuals, the Fund for Folk Culture, the Hellman Family Trust and the Sage Foundation. The film is scheduled to be finished by the end of 2008 and scheduled for release in the spring of 2009.

4) Digitizing the 45 rpm Texas-Mexican recordings in the Strachwitz Frontera Collection

In 2006 we received a grant from the NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) in Washington, D.C. to continue our efforts to digitize this unique collection of 45 rpm records of Mexican and Mexican American recordings, and to make them available through the UCLA Digital Library. This NEH grant required us to raise matching funds which we have partially obtained from the GRAMMY Foundation, the Fund For Labor Culture, Documentary Arts, Inc., the Fund for Folk Culture, and the Lucasfilm Foundation as well as from various individuals, however we are in need of further funds as this will be an ongoing project over several years!

5) Support for Prof. James Nicolopoulos' research for a book tentatively titled: "The Corrido On The Spot"

(The contributions of the independent small record labels on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border in the post WWII period) The Arhoolie Foundation and The Fund for Labor Culture have been assisting Prof. Nicolopoulos in his efforts to document the many voices and narratives of this vernacular regional tradition.





Comments about the Arhoolie Foundation

About: Digitizing the FRONTERA COLLECTION

"...what Chris has is an archaeological site: you open it and thousands of musicians and compositions come out. It is one of the treasures not only of Mexico, but of the United States and of the world."

– **Prof. Guillermo Hernandez**

"[The Frontera Collection] will change the nature of how we are perceived, how we see ourselves. It will help the next generation to better understand the richness that is our folk music." – **Prof. Guillermo Hernandez**

"The Arhoolie Foundation is to be applauded for its sustained commitment to the preservation of Mexican American musical culture...for its preserving this important body of material,... for documenting the performers, and taking steps to assure these primary research materials are available for future generations." – **Mark Roosa, Director for Preservation, Library of Congress.**

"Those of us who appreciate the grand but neglected body of musical productions by Mexican and Mexican Americans in the 20th century owe a major debt of gratitude to Chris Strachwitz and the Arhoolie Foundation for salvaging the massive Frontera Collection, and ...its caretaking. If Strachwitz and the Foundation do not [preserve and digitize the Collection], it will not be done, and a priceless vein of American heritage will be lost forever." – **Daniel Sheehy, Director and Curator, Smithsonian Folkways Records**

"The material is of great significance; the accessibility is well thought out and will increase with each passing year; the technical standards are high quality, and the project already has a very successful track record." – **Anthony Seeger, Professor of Ethnomusicology, UCLA**

"The Strachwitz Frontera Collection documents the growth and changes of a musical tradition that spanned regions and decades...We have seen that there is an urgent demand for this archive. Calls to my office from students, researchers, and members of the general public ...are frequent and detailed, and we have received high praise about the web site." – **Chon Noriega, Professor and Director, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center**

More comments about the Arhoolie Foundation

About: the film "SACRED STEEL" (DVD 203)

"The electric steel guitar music of the House of God churches was one of the most compelling vernacular music forms introduced to the general public at the close of the 20th century. Working with the Arhoolie Foundation to produce the Sacred Steel documentary film/DVD, we were able to present this fascinating tradition in its full cultural and historical context ... the video has been enthusiastically received by the church musicians and congregations, fans of American roots music, critics and scholars... and has brought long-overdue recognition and honor to its tradition-bearers, past and present".

-- Robert Stone, *folklorist, director of the Sacred Steel video, producer of eight CD albums of the music, and author of the forthcoming Sacred Steel book.*

About: the film "Red Alexander - Shipwright & Folk Artist" (DVD 202)

"Mr. Alexander began building ships on the Oakland, CA waterfront as a teenager. His life was seamless and he had a passion for ships. When he retired he began building model boats. The film/DVD gets great responses whenever shown to working people who can appreciate his pride in his trade as a shipwright."

– Archie Green – *folklorist and secretary of the Fund for Labor Culture & History*

About: the film "Everything But The Squeak!" (DVD 201)

"The disappearing art of the traditional Cajun boucherie has been preserved in this film! ... It recalls the days before refrigeration, when neighboring Cajun families would get together ... to slaughter and butcher livestock, cook it on the spot, and distribute the meat among the participants ... At Marc Savoy's they pass on the knowledge of how to do it from the old timers who did it as kids as a general means of survival... then there's the music ... including footage of live Cajun music both via a radio show emanating Saturday mornings from ...Fred's Lounge in nearby Mamou as well as a simultaneous jam session at the Savoy Music Center in Eunice, LA, where Marc Savoy manufactures his prized Cajun accordions. But the meat of the film, so to squeak, is the boucherie ... which is much more than a big pig-out!"

– Jim Bessman – *Billboard Magazine*

The Arhoolie Foundation

10341 San Pablo Ave.

El Cerrito, CA 94530

Website : www.arhoolie.org

Email: info@arhoolie.org

The ARHOOOLIE FOUNDATION is a public-not-for-profit educational organization dedicated to the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of authentic traditional and regional vernacular music.

The Arhoolie Foundation

10341 San Pablo Ave.

El Cerrito, CA 94530

