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Crabbe, John Oral History Interview

Unidentified

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Crabbe, John (1937-c.1959)
Speech, Director of campus radio station KCVN

Transcribed by Simren Hundal September 17, 2003

Early development of KVIE-Sacramento, President Robert Burn’s support of Crabbe’s effort to develop KVIE, Federal Communication Commission relationship to FM stations.
JC: Well there were concerts and stuff, so we had some activities going on throughout the summer…

Unidentified Male Speaker: What about requirements from the FCC, with regards to types of programming, were they pretty flexible on that as well?

JC: Yah, very flexible. Yah, they didn’t. If you enjoyed a non-commercial frequency you were given a lot of latitude, you have to remember that this was a noble experiment on part of the FCC. We fought I can’t tell you how hard we fought, for how long to get those twenty non commercial channels reserved for education. And the commission of course gave up somewhat reluctantly because the commercial broadcasters didn’t want to establish this precedent of reserving channels. And once they were granted, you see the commission had [pauses] put itself on the position of defending the action it had taken…

Unidentified Male Speaker: That’s right!

JC: So, as a consequence they were going to allow the FM stations, in particular to the non-commercial ones to do a lot of things. Because they didn’t want any of them to fail, it was as simple as that.

[Unidentified Male Speaker agrees throughout conversation]

JC: And some did, not too many, but some did. See, that’s a complete reversal of where you are today in the business because as nowadays AM radio just not listened to the same degree, that FM is, it’s a complete reversal. Those of us who bet on FM back then, gee they thought we were crazy. They just thought we were absolute idiots, to put that kind of a thing on. And I kept saying its gonna happen its gotta happen, there’s not enough room on the AM band for all of these things. The one of the other things that we used to do is, take these kids to a lot of conferences, the AERO conferences. We’d load up a carload of kids and take them up to Portland or Salt Lake City or San Francisco, for several days with their colleagues, mothers. [inaudible].

Unidentified Female Speaker: You had a national precedence here, I don’t remember [inaudible]…

JC: That’s right I forgot what [inaudible] that was…

Unidentified Female Speaker: And one other thing you were gonna talk about too, briefly was the connection of UOP and the KV-KVIE…
JC: Oh, yah, I would like to plow that into this dialogue, because it’s overlooked. Are we running out of time down there?

Unidentified Male Speaker: No, you can go ahead and go, although I do…

JC: I do want to get into this, just a little bit of information, regarding the role of the university, as to the develop of KVIE channel six the public television station in the area, it’s a thing that’s long been overlooked. At the time in 1958, [uh] let me go back in history, just briefly. There was a channel forty-two reserved here, a channel six reserved in Sacramento. There were two community organizations organized, one in each city, to develop support for those two stations, in their own communities. Well, we have somewhat the same story with the channel forty-two of those days; UHF television was a little bit ahead [inaudible]. Plus the fact that you had a much broader population base in Sacramento, so the two groups merged and decided to go for channel six. A grant had been given by the fun for [inaudible] education, the Ford Foundation, in the amount of a hundred thousand dollars, to be matched one a two for one basis to develop channel six. This had been in place for a long long time, and finally they said you have till March of 1959, [uh] 59 or 58?…

Unidentified Male Speaker: eight

JC: Fifty eight, March of 1958, to get your matching money together, well I had become involved in this whole merger process, whatever, and the group turned to me. What are we gonna do? How are we gonna get this money? I said well, I dunno, try. I went to Bob Burns explained the dilemma, said they wanted me to go out in the field, and raise this money at ninety days. Bob let me finish my courses in the fall, by Christmas vacation; normally the semester would not have been over till the end of January. And so I could devote full time, Bob went and worked in the office. Back up in the office along with the secretary that we had. And I went out in the field, supported by the university, to raise that money, they kept me on the payroll constantly. I was able well, another good friend, Willard Hancock was the County superintendent of schools here, and he put me on a consulting basis to cover some of my expenses. So they made a substantial contribution, the college kept me on, I did come back into teaching in the spring of that semester. But I still spent a significant amount of time in putting together all these parts of channel six, and still on the university’s college payroll. And I went on leave, July one that year, for one year, and they renewed it for a second year, as a matter of fact, before I finally decided which way to go, and I decided to go with channel six. So the university, the college’s support for channel six was monumental and its I think been lost, in a lot of the developments over time, with regard to that.

Unidentified Female Speaker: They not only provided you with your salary so you could do that. But they also allowed us to maintain a central office right in the radio station, where funds were sent in….
JC: Oh yah…

Unidentified Female Speaker: …And tabulated and everything else. To make the Ford Foundation grant…

JC: We raised a hundred and fifteen thousand dollars in ninety days, in the form of ten dollar memberships, in an area ranging from Redding to Turlock up and down this valley, and that was all handled right here on this campus.

Unidentified Female Speaker: And we slept on forty thousand of it, in our bedsprings, I’ll never forget that. Cause a lot of it came in cash, and John got home about midnight from someplace and he had forty thousand or sixty thousand in checks and cash, and there was no place to put it, so we put it under the bedsprings [laughter]

JC: …Till the bank opened the next day. I was that was coming back from a thing from Redding

Unidentified Female Speaker: Redding…

JC: Through Sacramento, so anyway I did want to get that in, cause its to often-lost sight of.

Unidentified Female Speaker 2: Well, I would say that thanks to you, John Crabbe and Bobbin that the community of Stockton had very fine broadcast coverage, during the period that you were here, and either by radio or subsequently through channel six television, that you certainly made your mark in this community, and giving us the benefit of really fine broadcasting.

JC: We’ve tried our hardest I’ll tell you that. [laughter]

Unidentified Female Speaker 2: Perhaps this is a good place to stop this second tape, of an interview with Bob, and Gay and John Crabbe regarding their experience here and certainly their formative influence in radio broadcasting in the College of Pacific now the University of the Pacific. Thank You!

**SIDE B – Spring Membership Drive during Prairie Home Companion c.2000**

JC: Thank you, [uh] not to long ago I was doing research into my ancestors and to my family, and it involved reading, a lot, things that I haven’t read in a while. And I read the bible, the Old Testament particularly. [Uh] I read a lot of other religious documents, things from the 19th century. I have two kids, daughter eight, and a son five. And the combination of those facts produced this piece. It
has a rather long title, its called, Laws Concerning Food and Drink Household Principles, Lamentations of the Father.

“Of the beasts of the field, and of the fishes of the sea, and of all foods that are acceptable in my sight, you may eat, but not in the living room. [laughter] Of the hoofed animals, boiled or ground into burgers, you may eat, but not in the living room. [laughter] Of the cloven hoofed animal, plain or with cheese, you may eat, but not in the living room. [laughter] Of the cereal grains, of the corn and of the oats and of all the cereals that are of bright color and unknown provenance, [laughter] you may eat but not in the living room. [laughter] Of the quiescently frozen desert and of all frozen after meal treats, you may eat, but absolutely not in the living room. Of the juices and other beverages, yes even of those in sippy cups, [laughter] you may drink but not in the living room, neither may you care such therein. [laughter] Indeed, when you reach the place, where the living room carpet begins, [laughter] of any food or beverage there, you may not eat nor may you may drink. [laughter] But if you are sick and lying down watching something then you may eat in the living room. [laughter]

Laws, when at table, and if you are seated in your high chair, or in a chair such as a greater person might use, [laughter] keep your legs and feet below you as they were, neither raise up your knees nor place your feet upon the table, for that is an abomination to me. [laughter] Yes, even when you have an interesting bandage to show, [laughter] your feet upon the table are an abomination, and worthy of rebuke. [laughter] Drink you milk as it is given you, neither use it on any utensils, nor for [laughter] nor knife nor spoon, [light laughter] for that is not what they are for. [laughter] If you will dip your blocks in the milk, and lick it off, you will be sent away. [loud laughter] When you have drunk, let the empty cup then remain upon the table, and do not bite it upon its edge, [laughter] and by your teeth hold it to your face, sounding like a duck, [loud laughter] for you will be sent away. [laughter] When you chew your food, keep your mouth closed, until you have swallowed, and do not open it, to show your brother or your sister, what is within. [laughter] I said to you do not sow even if your brother or sister has done the same to you. [laughter] Eat your food only, do not eat that which is not food; neither cease the table between your jaws, [light laughter] nor use the remnant of the table, to wipe your lips. I say again to you, do not touch it but leave it as it is. And though your stick of carrot does indeed resemble a marker, draw not with it upon the table, even in pretend, for we do not do that that is why. [laughter] And though the pieces of broccoli are very much like small trees, do not stand them up right to make a forest, [laughter] because we do not do that, that is why. [laughter] Sit just as I have told you and do not lean to one side or the other, nor slide down until you are nearly slid away, [laughter] heed me for if you sit like that, your hair will go into the syrup. And now behold even as I have said, it has come to pass. [loud laughter]

Laws pertaining to desert, [laughter] for we judge between the plate that is unclean and the plate that is clean, saying, first if the plate is clean, then you shall
have desert. [laughter] But of the unclean plate the laws are these, [laughter] if you have eaten most of your meat, and two bites of your peas, with each bite consisting of not less than three peas each, [laughter] or in total six peas, eaten where I can see, [laughter] and you have also eaten enough of your potatoes to fill two forks, [laughter] both fork fulls eaten where I can see, then you shall have desert. [laughter] But if you eat a lesser number of peas, and yet you eat the potatoes, still you shall not have desert, [laughter] and if you eat the peas, yet leave the potatoes uneaten, you shall not have desert, no not even a small portion thereof. [laughter] And if you try to deceive by moving the potatoes or peas around with a fork, [light laughter] that it may appear you have eaten what you have not, you will fall into inequity, [loud laughter] and I will know and you shall have no desert. [laughter]

On screaming, do not scream for it is as if you scream all the time. If you are given a plate, on which two foods, you do not wish to touch each other, are touching each other. [laughter] Your voice rises up, even to the ceiling, while you point to the offense, with the finger of your right hand. [laughter] But I say to you scream not, only remonstrate gently with the server, that the server may correct the fault. [laughter] Likewise if you receive a portion of fish, from which every piece of herbal seasoning has not been scraped off, [laughter] and the herbal seasoning is loathsome to you and steeped in vileness, [laughter] again I say refrain from screaming, though the vileness overwhelm you, and cause you a faint onto death. [laughter] Make not that sound, from within your throat, neither cover your face, nor press your fingers to your nose, [laughter] for even now I have made the fish, as it should be. Behold, I eat of it myself, yet do not die. [loud laughter]

Concerning, face and hands, cast your countenance upward to the light, and lift your eyes to the hills, that I may more easily wash you off, [laughter] for the stains are upon you, even to the very back of your head, there is rice thereon. [laughter] And in the breast pocket of your garment, and upon the tie of your shoe, rice and other fragments are distributed in a manner, wonderful to see. [laughter] Only, hold yourself still, hold still I say, give each finger in its turn, for my examination, thereof, and also each thumb, low how iniquitous they appear. What I do is as it must be and you shall not go hence until I have done.

Various other laws, statutes, and ordinances. Bite not, lest you be cast, into quiet time. [loud laughter] Neither drink of your own bath water, nor of bath water of any kind. [laughter] Nor rub your feet on bread, even if it be in the package, nor rub yourself against cars, nor against any building, nor eat sand. [laughter] Leave the cat alone, for what has the cat done that you should so afflict it with tape. [loud laughter] And hum not that humming in your nose, as I read, nor stand between the light and the book, indeed you will drive me to madness. [laughter] Nor forget what I said about the tape.
Complaints and lamentations. Oh, my children you are disobedient, for when I tell you what you must do, you argue and dispute hotly even to the littlest detail, and when I do not exceed you cry out and hit and kick, yes and even sometimes do you spit, and shout stupid head and other blasphemies. [laughter] And hit and kick the wall and the molding there of, when you are sent to the corner, and though the law teaches that no one shall be sent to the corner, for more minutes than he has years of age, [laughter] yet I would leave you there all day, so mighty am I in anger. [laughter] But upon being sent to the corner, you ask straightaway “Can I come out”? And I reply, “No you may not come out.” [light laughter] And again you ask and again I give the same reply, but when you ask again the third time, then you may come out.

Hear me all my children, for the bills they kill me, I pay and pay again, even to the twelfth time in a year, and yet again they mount higher than before, for our health, that we may be covered, I give six hundred and twenty talents, twelve times in a year, but even this covers not the fifteen hundred deductible for each member of the family, within a calendar year. [laughter] And yet for ordinary visits we still are not covered, nor for many medicines, [laughter] nor for the teeth within our mouths, guess not at what rages in my mind, for surely you can not know. [laughter] For I will come to you at the first of the month, and the fifteenth of the month, with the bills and a great whining and moan. And when the month of taxes comes, I will decry the wrong and unfairness of it, and mourn with whine and ashtrays, and rend my receipts. And you shall remember that I am that I am, before after and until you are twenty-one. [laughter] Hear me then and avoid me in my wrath, oh children of me. [laughter]

DL: Lamentations of a father, on this prairie home companion, on this is the final day of our spring membership campaign. Good evening, I’m Duncan Lively, this is 91.3 KUOP, Stockton Modesto, we are about to wind down this fundraising edition of a prairie home companion, running a little long tonight, because you folks have kept us very busy out there, in the last half hour, with your pledge of support. And we’re going to thank you for that, in just a moment, I wanna pass on a couple of programming notes, first American Ritz, with Rick Spitzer, will be heard in its entirety tonight, after we listen to the rest of the Prairie home companion, and that’s going to run until, about what John? What time? That’s lots of fingers; I’m too stupid to interpret that.

J: Until about eight minutes after six or so.

Okay, and in the mean time lets thank everybody who called, incidentally if we still have volunteers here, and if you did get a busy signal, while trying to call in earlier, you can still reach us on 1-800-800-5867, but the big news is that we have made our goal. We raised three thousand dollars during our Prairie home companion this afternoon, that allowed us to law claim to that thousand dollars from the member matching fund, and its been good work all around.
J: Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

DL: Florence Wesich calling in from Stockton, has pledged on her credit card, loves the classical music, and in fact loves all of what she hears on 91.3 KUOP. Thank you Florence.

Unidentified Female Speaker: Debbie Bailey thank you very much from Turlock, she put her pledge on a credit card and we thank her for that.

J: Bart Atwoodebby, pardon me if I’m not pronouncing your last name properly, called from Modesto, to become a new member of this radio station, thank you so much. Also, Alice Anderson called from Modesto, [uh] Alice is renewing her membership, thanks Alice.

DL: A renewing member asking not to be named, called in from Modesto, and has added his and her, their voice to the community that is supporting 91.3 KUOP, thank you very much for that.

Unidentified Female Speaker: Gerald Kent from Mariposa, says he likes the three o’ clock news, and is renewing his membership, thank you.

DL: Here’s somebody who’s going to Bear Valley for the concert, Linda Thorp called in and pledged on her credit card. She’s a new member and called in from Copperopolis, thank you Linda.

J: Have a good time Linda; it’s going to be a great show.

DL: Jackie Cross called to add to her membership, thanks Jackie. And speaking of adding to membership through the generosity of the current existing members of 91.3 KUOP, who’ve contributed to the member matching fund for this membership campaign, we’re going to receive an extra thousand dollars for this drive, and I would just like to thank all of those people who responded to our telemarketing effort.

J: Absolutely, you’ve went a long way towards assuring this would be a successful campaign, which was in doubt until about half an hour ago actually. Helen Page called in from Mukolemne Hill?

DL: Mukolemne Hill, yah…

J: couldn’t quite read it, our phone number, our phone volunteers were getting into bit of a frenzy down there, in the last fifteen minutes or so. Again, if you reached a busy signal we still have folks here to take your call at 1-800-800-5867, but we have made the goal. Anyway Helen pledged on a credit card, thank you Helen.
Unidentified female speaker: Victoria Coldwell from Modesto also placed her pledge on a credit card, and she’ll be picking up the Ellis CD, thank you.

DL: A prairie home companion fan as well as a blue grass fan, called in from Sacramento. And will be paying by check, thank you very much for that. Also, Irene Muster called in from Stockton, is renewing her membership and is going for that great Ella Fitzgerald CD, twenty tracks of Ella with pianist, Ellis Larkins. Just about the purist rendering of an American song I think that I’ve ever heard. Again we are where we need to be with this campaign thank you very much for making it a success, if you did try to call a few minutes ago, were still here to take your calls for awhile, at 1-800-800-5867, and here uninterrupted is the remainder of this weeks Prairie Home Companion, and the finalists, the winners of the talent from Talents Under 2000 Contest, thank you very much.

Unidentified Man Speaker: Well, what a wonderful contest it was, such wonderful groups they were all so so different from each other. And a little folk music and a little opera and a little bit of everything else. Please welcome our winner of our contest, please welcome from Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts [inaudible] The Virtual Consort, [music plays, cheering, applause, and whistling]. Mr. Jean Chang on the base, Harold Schmaevitz the trumpeter, and Peter Blanchett playing the arch guitar. Peter Blanchett the man kicked out of Dunmar for playing music on the street. [laughter] Winning vindication here at last [laughter] in New York City. What a great combination here, base, trumpet, and arch guitar, what you gonna play for us here?

PB: Well, one of the things that we like to do is, is we like to play around different kinds of music at the same time. So, Charlie Schmaevitz (sic) and I wrote a piece where we imagined what it would be like if Maurice Ravel and Miles Davis worked together, [laughter] which and we came up with a piece called had Miles met Maurice. [laughter]

Unidentified Man Speaker: [inaudible]

[Laughter]

[Inaudible]

[Had Miles met Maurice plays]

[Applause]

Unidentified Male Speaker: Virtual Consorts, the winners of our talent [inaudible] of the 2000 contest. I want to thank our staff Joyce Besh, Kay Gornick, Kate Justice, Rob Knowles, Katherine Mack, Katie Mackaral, Mike Gamcore, from [inaudible]. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped count balance. Our technical crew Jeff Johnson, Jason Keeler, Sam Hudson, Allen
Freckmen, Janice Kaiser, Steve Calden, the crew here at Town Hall. The technical director is Scott Revara, the associate producer is Stevie Beck, the show is produced by Christine Cheetah. And the Prairie Home Companion made possible tonight by the folks at Lands End, who think that quality service is just as important as quality clothing, Lands End guaranteed period. Thanks to all of our groups from Woodland Hills, Utah [inaudible] from Fox, Arkansas Harmony, from Claire Stopula from Casper, California Tour De France, from Freemen, Indiana Jake Craft on the fiddle, Virtual Consort and from Earlysville and Harrods, Virginia the Virginia Cutups. [Laughter, applause, and whistling in the background all the while.]

[Music plays]
[Audience sings along]

Unidentified Male Speaker: PRI, Public Radio International, you’ve been listening to a Prairie Home Companion, on 91.3 KUOP, Stockton Modesto, member supported public radio from the University of the Pacific. You can here uninterrupted repeat broadcast of this afternoons program tomorrow evening at six o’clock. Anne Garrison Keeler returns with another program next Saturday, afternoon at three. And 91.3 KUOP would like to thank the Bagel Express in Stockton for providing assorted bagels to the staff and volunteers here at 91.3 KUOP during our spring membership campaign, and also Da Vinci Delicatessen in Stockton for lunch this afternoon and the Black Water Café for coffee throughout our spring membership campaign. Coming up in a moment is two hours of music from across America, on American Roots with Nick Spitzer and at eight o’clock join Candies for more folk acoustic and Celtic music here on 91.3 KUOP.

[Music plays]


Unidentified Male Speaker: Join Leanne Hansen on Weekend Edition tomorrow morning from seven to nine here on member supported 91.3 KUOP. Its fifty-six degrees in Stockton, at 6:10.

Unidentified Male Speaker: PRI, Public Radio International.

[Music plays]

NS: Your traveling on American Roots from New Orleans, all American music, with roots rock and soul, blues, country, and beyond. I’m Nick Spitzer from the bayous to the bell ways, from blue high ways to blacktop, from cross roads to
cross towns, from coast to coast, [music plays] here on the third coast its American Roots from New Orleans, on this show we’ll reach back for an atmospheric final conversation with the late trumpet legend, Dock Chetham. About his then to be Grammy award winning collaboration with Nicolas Payton, almost seventy years Doc’s junior. [Rain falls] It’s time for April showers and in Louisiana we measure rain in feet not inches, we go with the flow of rivers and beyond to the sounds of surf and the deep. We’ll hear music from Jimmie Hendrix, Doc Watson, Billie Holiday, and the original Rolling Stone McKinley Morganfield. Also known by the liquid name of Muddy Waters, [music plays] first the Neville Brothers start a fire on the bayou. [Music continues]

[Song by Stone McKinley Morganfield plays]

[New song plays]

[New song plays]

Unidentified Male Speaker: Country blues from the delta to Chicago and back, with the blues and country yodeling down by the river.

[Music continues]

[New song plays]

[Ocean and paddleboat noises]

Unidentified Male Speaker: Bob Dhillon in one of his whatever moods, watching the river flow. In front of that King Hiram Williams, reaching for that biblical illusion, down by the river. We know him as Hank Williams, from Georgiana, Alabama, doing that blues yodeling, long gone lonesome blues, in 1950. You’re hearing the paddle wheel of the riverboat, matches, leaving the dock here in New Orleans, on the Mississippi River. In this show of flow, seems like we ought to bring you something from showboat. This is a four-part harmony version of a well-known song, sung here by the Ravens.

[Song by Ravens plays]

[Deep River Blue plays by Doc Watson]

Unidentified Male Speaker: Doesn’t get much better than Doc Watson, Deep River Blues. I’m in the mood to tell people’s original real names here, Arthell Doc Watson, how many Arthells do you know out there? John Hyatt works the country, folk, pop arena of music in a wonderfully arch way, this song feels like rain, mentions Lake Ponchatrain, right here near New Orleans. And also from near New Orleans living over there in Brow Bridge, Louisiana, but born in Mississippi, Sonny Landrath on guitar, John Hyatt, Feels Like Rain.