

Ken Lillard, Narrator  
Brenda Lawson, Interviewer

2/9/2005, tape 1, side 1

BL: Can you tell me your name for me?

KL: Yes, my name is Ken Lillard.

BL: And what is your date of birth?

KL: January 22, 1924

BL: Okay, can you tell me when you first came to Union County?

KL: In the early part of December 1944.

BL: And what was it that brought you to this area?

KL: I was employed by Inland Radio Incorporated or KLBM here in La Grande.

BL: Can you tell me more about that [uh] assignment?

KL: Well, years ago I had an interesting experience in the history class where they set up a literal sort of radio station within the school and I volunteered to do some announcing work on that, which was really very brief, but I enjoyed doing that sort of thing and then consequently we were in California living there and a friend of mine suggested that I should go to a radio broadcasting school because she thought that I had the voice for radio. So I went to this school in Beverly Hills for three months. One of the instructors sort of took a liking to me and said "I am going to open, well not to really open a school, but to teach in one that was just opening". So eventually I ended up in Portland and sent out a number of audition records and one was sent to La Grande KLBM, and I was hired and so I came here.

BL: Okay. How many people listening to this tape may not know what a record is? So why don't we start by [by] maybe a description of a record.

KL: I mentioned the record that I mailed to a number of radio stations, which was an audition record and those were made of glass. They were probably eight or ten inches in diameter and you recorded on those, and they did not last very long because you played them several times; they just wore out. Then in the radio broadcasting field a record would be the same size of a disc and made out of a more durable substance and was played and recorded at 78 revolutions per minute; that's a record.

BL: Okay. So tell me more about what happened when you arrived in La Grande to take on this position?

KL: Well, that's a little difficult to answer in a way. I came to La Grande as a disc jockey. KLBM was the only radio station in Union County at that time, 250 watts of power. The manager was one "Gordon Caps", he was a kind gentleman and I went to work. I came here on a Sunday, went to work on the following day, Monday, and [um] of course you are "broken in" to the routine of what you had to do, and [uh] subsequently got into sales.

BL: Now when you first started on that first day [um] what did your job entail? What, [what] did you have to do?

KL: Plug records, [uh] and reading commercials, reading the news. The news was World and National News that came from a Teletype. A teletype from United Press [um] that brought in the news that you would read on the air.

BL: Can you describe for me how a Teletype works?

KL: Well, they were hooked up by telephone lines actually, and looked, operated a great deal like a typewriter would. Had the keys that would fly up, you know, to make the numbers or the letters just like an ordinary typewriter would, however, it was encased in a cabinet type thing. It had a roll of paper that was threaded through the machine and the information would be typed on this paper, and it would continually roll out of the Teletype unit until the time that you came in and tore the tape reel off and then the

various stories that were encompassed, why you would tear those off and usually there would be a place for National News, Regional News and whatever.

BL: Did this operate 24-hours a day?

KL: Yes. And where you would go in and select the news case, which [uh] you knew which one it was, and tear it up and maybe glance through to see if there were any words you couldn't pronounce and then broadcast them.

BL: So these were live broadcasts?

KL: Yes.

BL: Okay. Tell me a little more about the music that you played when you first started?

KL: Well, it was to us a popular music that included bands such as Glen Miller, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Dorsey, some of those, and [uh] back then in radio you did more than just play dance music, you might have an hour, not probably an hour, but half an hour of military music. You might have concert music that would maybe last for an hour and [um] this would be inter-spaced with news, commercials, other service announcements and that sort of thing.

BL: How much freedom did you have in choosing the music that was played?

KL: Entirely your choice. [Tape interruption]

BL: We were talking about the freedom that you had in playing and choosing the types of music that you had. What other things were going on during the day?

KL: Well in addition to records we had what was called a Transcription Library. These were large discs, but oh, probably were maybe 18 to 20 inches in diameter and they would have probably [uh] five, maybe six selections on each side. Actually if you took a long play disc that has been fairly recent here [uh] it would be the same thing as a Transcription Library, only a larger disc you know. They had all kinds of musical selections in the Transcription Library and it was something our company would lease to you; you put "X" amount of dollars per month for its use and you had every month a new transcription coming into freshen up your library.

BL: Now those weren't for [um] for the personal consumer, they were just strictly for the radio industry?

KL: Right, right [uh, uh]

BL: [uh] tell me more about the selection process and choosing to use it. Was there anything about the area [that sort] that sort of predicted what you would say? Because you come from the city, so I would imagine things maybe were a little bit different in a rural area than in the city.

KL: I really don't think so because my experience in the city was quite limited, because I was not involved in any way really with radio; I even didn't listen to it too often, and [uh] so no, I don't think there was any thing specific about Union County that you would select certain numbers for use.

BL: As far as the Public Service Announcements, how were those generated?

KL: Well, that is a good question, [laughs] I am not sure I remember positively, but [uh] I assume that, oh, like Red Cross, possibly Cancer and some of the others would send discs to you that you would play on the air. Some of them were live announcements and printed announcements that you would read live.

BL: How many of those announcements were really pertaining to local events rather than national?

KL: Well, back then when I first came to La Grande I would say that there weren't a lot that pertained to local organizations. Later in my broadcast experience, and then we did do a lot of local Public Service Announcements.

BL: How long do you suppose it took for people to start to recognize that you were the voice on the radio?

KL: Oh not too long I would say. If I may, I will mention that there was an hour program called "This is your favorite", it was a request program. People would send in a card or letter requesting that you play something for somebody, and so that's what you did, you would pick the selection that they wanted and you would read the request that they had sent in and play it, and [uh] I know there will be some people that would say, "Oh, KLBM stands for Ken Lillard's big mouth".

BL: [Laughs]

KL: My secretary later on said "no, it means brilliant mind, that'll cost ya."

BL: So you were a little well known then?

KL: Oh ya. Ya.

BL: How significant do you think KLBM was in the area? You said it was the first radio, the only radio, so how significant was that to this area?

KL: Oh I think very. We did a lot of things for the community and I think KLBM was definitely a community minded radio station. We participated in all sorts of things, The Eastern Oregon Livestock Show, the Elgin Stampede, [uh] The Union County Fair. We would set up a remote broadcast from the Fair Grounds, and I will bet we did eight or ten broadcasts from there. I can recall early in my years here that we even took the Teletype to the broadcast booth that we had at the Fair Grounds and I would go out like at 7:00 in the morning and do the first radio broadcast news from there. And [um] we [we] if people walked their dog or their cast or something, they would call and we would put it on the air, and you know, where \_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_ it was pretty important, and of course we promoted and assisted in many other ways; The Salvation Army, the blood drawing at Red Cross, you name it we did it.

BL: Were there any [uh] activities or, or areas that you really tried to steer clear of?

KL: No. I don't really think so.

BL: Okay, and on those same lines were there certain words or kind of lingo that you, that would just [what am I trying to say] that you couldn't use on the radio, places where you just had to really be careful, certain topics maybe?

KL: Well that's true [uh] you didn't run into that so much here as in your larger areas and the networks and that sort of thing. But there were words that you just steered clear of all of them on the radio, pregnancy was one of them for an example, and others that I don't care to mention right here.

BL: Okay. [Uh] now as you sort of advanced in your position, tell me what happened next?

KL: Well I guess I got into more selling advertising and eventually became manager, and then after a number of years [uh] I [uh] bought KLBM Radio.

BL: Lets back up just a little bit there to the days of advertising, is that what you said, advertising? Tell me what that was like [uh] what would be an average day?

KL: Well, you had certain accounts that you would call on and you would go to that store, talk to the manager and present him [uh] a number of suggestions that would be helpful [uh] for their business by the use of radio advertising.

BL: Were these written by yourself?

KL: Usually, usually ya. And you know I guess that \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_.

BL: But it was mainly a face to face sales guy?

KL: Yes.

BL: You didn't rely on phoning [uh]?

KL: Occasionally you would telephone, but generally it was a face to face thing.

BL: Okay, [did] was it popular for the local businesses to advertise on the radio?

KL: Quite! It took a while. When Inland Radio bought KLBM it was; the station hadn't been on the air a long time, a few years; and I think KLBM went on the air probably in 37 or 38, and Inland Radio bought the station oh probably, 42 or 3, somewhere around in there. I came in 44 and the radio station had to be built up from a stand point of doing a good

job [um], gaining listnership, and subsequently, why yes, it became [uh] a very important facet of the community and the developmental business for local businesses.

BL: Ken, can you give me more information about that?

BL: Originally it was owned by Marshall Cornet and Lee Jacobs. Lee was in Baker and Marshall Cornet I think lived in Salem or Portland and was a State Representative. He and the Governor, which was Governor Snell at that time and one or two other people I think, were in a small plane and it crashed and every one of them was killed. So Marshall's wife Olive, stepped in and [take] took over for him and worked with Lee Jacobs and then Lee was killed in an automobile accident, at which time then Gordon Caps sort of stepped in and took over his duties and his responsibilities and [uh] I did not know Marshall Cornet, but his wife Olive [was uh] she was a wonderful lady, [and uh] had a lot of good people involved in Inland Radio.

BL: And these were previous owners then before you had purchased, or these were people that you came to work for when you first got here?

KL: I came to work for Gordon Caps and he and Lee Jacobs were the ones that actually hired me. Then I worked for them for a number of years before I became manager, and then after a period of years, then I bought the radio station and then I sold to Brian and Bill Crustal in 1985.

BL: You know I didn't ask when you first got here where the station was located.

KL: It was on the old Highway 30, currently it was if you went past Les Schwab there is a right hand turn to Bi-Mart and it was just about where that turn is, is where the building was located.

BL: Can you tell me more about that building, how large was it?

KL: It was not very large, it was actually an old home and there had been what, an office to the left as you entered and the office where you went into the right of that would go into the studio and to the left of that was a record library and the transmitter room. That's it.

BL: Where did you spend most of your time?

KL: Well probably in the [uh] studio or the transmitter room because that's where you played the records and did the announcing for the most part.

BL: Can you tell me anymore than of the set up of the studio, some of the equipment involved maybe?

KL: Well, in the studio there wasn't very much, a table and chair, and a microphone. There we had a piano and that's about all.

BL: Did you play the piano on the air?

KL: No. No, I guess it was there; there was a religious broadcast, I think it was on Sundays I remember, and [us] they had people who would sing and they would use the piano then.

BL: Uh Uh. Did you ever have people in for live interviews?

KL: Oh ya, Yep.

BL: What sorts of people would be typical to interview?

KL: Oh people from the School District, from the Chamber of Commerce. [Um] when I became manager I hired a gentleman of the name of Bob Mask and he was the local news director and gathered local news, interviewed people and he would interview people from the Oregon State Fish and Wildlife. He interviewed Governor Tom McCall when he was on the campaign trail to be elected, and incidentally, I sent Bob a letter afterwards, says that Bob had done one of the best interviews that he had had on the trip.

BL: Do you recall any interviews that were really, that really stand out in your mind?

KL: I don't think so. [Uh]

BL: We are talking about some of your more notable interviews. Did you think of some that you \_\_\_\_\_?

KL: We at the time were located in the Sacajawea Hotel right where the US National Bank is located, but in the lobby of the Hotel I recall that Julie Eisenhower, no [laughs] that's her

name now, Julie Nixon, who is the daughter of Richard Nixon, and David Eisenhower the grandson of Dwight Eisenhower, were in the lobby of the hotel and we met them and they were interviewed on the air by somebody, it wasn't me. And we did have certain personalities that had like a western musical group like T Texas Tyler, and I remember broadcasting his amount of music of his live, and there was a place in La Grande called Zuper Hall, maybe you have heard of that? It was subsequently called Arellas Garden [?] and she would bring in almost on a weekly basis a name band and we would always broadcast a half hour from there on KLBM, and that was our fun time.

BL: You mentioned that you had made a switch now to the Sacajawea Hotel. When did KLBM make that move?

KL: I am not really sure if I could tell you that, I don't know. I don't know if I have it in my notes or not.

BL: So at some point you did move from that house past Les Schwab into the Hotel. Can you tell me what that was like making that move?

KL: Oh, that was exciting as you possibly could imagine. We took over almost the entire \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ and we built our offices, the studio, the transmitter room, the control room, the news room, the record library, everything on the mezzanine [?] and it was one of the best places to be because if anything important was going to happen it would happen at the Sacajawea Hotel, and we were right there. We would easily get a hold of somebody and bring them into the studio and do an interview with them for example; and we had a lot of exciting times there.

BL: Had you taken on the roll as manager at this point?

KL: Yes.

BL: So what was that like switching over from sales and from the disc jockey position and going into manager?

KL: Well in management, in addition to personnel and all of those things, I still sold advertising and would take commercials and type them and that sort of thing, so it was just an addition to my routine to be manager.

BL: So your work load increased?

KL: It did.

BL: More so than your responsibilities, the different responsibilities in all.

KL: It did, yes.

BL: From manager than you made another step up.

KL: Ya, I [uh] at that particular time came when I wanted to buy the station and Mr. Caps was willing to sell to me, so I bought the KLBM Radio, and lets see, when could that have been, I purchased that in the year 1972 and subsequently there was another radio station that went on the air, it was an FM station, and they were not successful so I bought that out in 1977.

BL: So, as manager and the next owner, where there any specific issues that you had to deal with as far as the radio industry itself?

KL: I'm not sure that I understand the question.

BL: Well you had mentioned earlier about some of the issues in the larger cities with having networks and that kind of a thing, and here I gathered that you were more independent, but were there issues that you really had to be aware of in working on the radio?

KL: All the things particularly that you had to be aware of, you of course participated in a variety of things [um] as manager/owner I attempted to be involved with things like the Chamber of Commerce, and I was Chairman of the Red Cross Board of Directors, and that type of thing, [um] you naturally just worked with them and offered your services of the broadcast station as needed.

BL: Uh, um. So I gather the importance of the community then was really important?

KL: Still very important.

BL: Okay.

KL: I guess maybe something as a side line that was probably helpful for the community, La Grande experienced a flood, they experienced two forest fires, and KLBM was at their disposal any way they could be. And um, the announcers at the radio station would accept calls from officials telling people what they should do and particularly in the \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ of fire there. Volunteers would go to a particular area and we would tell them [ya know] volunteers are needed in another location, and that's the way that went.

BL: Uh um. [Tape interruption]

BL: Today is February 15, 2005 and I am here for a second interview with Ken Lillard, and I wanted to just go back a little bit, we want to clarify a couple of things. Ken, can you tell me, at one point we were talking about words that wouldn't have been appropriate on the radio and you wanted to make a correction.

KL: Yes, I mentioned that pregnancy was not used on the air, we did not have any problem with that, we never used the word "term", but 12 words and maybe some items that would be advertised we wouldn't use those. Then I think you asked, "When did we mover to the Sacajawea Hotel", that was in 1955.

BL: Okay, thank you for those clarifications. Now, we also sort of ended the tape talking about a fire, and the importance of having the radio station here in a situation like that because you were able to distribute volunteers into certain areas where they were needed; were there any other events like that that occurred where you felt like a radio was really a key part of organization perhaps?

KL: I don't remember anything of that particular nature. One thing that might be of interest, the Salvation Army had collected under \$2,000.00 for their Christmas fund, this was just awhile before Christmas, and somebody broke in and stole it. So I got on the radio and made the announcement and said something to the effect that if we could get seventeen hundred people to donate a dollar they would recoup their losses. Well, we ended up, I don't remember now, but somewhere close to \$4,000.00 dollars.

Ken Lillard, Narrator

Brenda Lawson, Interviewer

2/15/2005, tape 1, side 2

BL: So the radio was not only important in times of negative situations, but also in positive ways for fund raising?

KL: Right, uh uh. We did quite a bit of that and, I don't know, there is probably other areas but they don't come to mind right now.

BL: Okay. Your wife had mentioned off tape some fun times at the radio station. Do you want to tell us a little bit about that?

KL: Well, we had a lot of fun. [Uh] it was a good time to be in radio. I think what she referred to was at election time. We would have people at various precincts at eight o'clock when the poles closed and they would jot down the vote tally at that time, bring them to the radio station and we had a couple of people with adding machines and we would total those up and broadcast them on the air. And we had various types of refreshments and all kinds of people would come out to take on how the election was going, as well as listening to it, and [uh] oh, we would have a crowd of people and it was a lot of fun.

BL: You also mentioned that you participated in sporting events. What were some of those events like?

KL: We would broadcast the La Grande High School Football games, Basketball games, and most of the Eastern Oregon College; it was called then; games also. And I think probably that was the extent of the sporting events that were broadcast locally. [Uh] and they all had their challenges of course.

BL: Were there challenges that involved [uh] technology, for instance trying to get set up in these remote locations?

KL: Not so much technology as oh maybe, a piece of equipment would not be working properly, or the telephone company had failed to put up what they called "The Patch", which would patch us into the phone lines so we could get the broadcast on the air, things like that.

BL: Tell me a little more about the licensing requirements and your relationship with the FCC?

KL: I cant remember, I think it was every four years you had to have your license renewed, and back then it was quite a task because you had to make a list of all the Public Service Announcements that you did, public relations, news, entertainment, all sorts of things, and this required a lot of time and effort to compile all of this information and then put it down on their forms, [uh] to present back to the FCC for license renewal; it was a job.

BL: Where were their headquarters located?

KL: Washington DC.

BL: So you were communicating via mail with them?

KL: Yes.

BL: Okay. For how long [did that] did the process take to get your licensing?

KL: I suppose it would take a couple of months, you know not hour, from hour to hour, but over a period of a couple of months to put all of this information together and then [uh] send it to the FCC and then it would take another probably two or three months for them to give you your license renewal.

BL: Do you suppose that it is a lot more lenient now?

KL: I think it is. [Uh] in fact I think about the last one I did before I got out of the business was more or less a postcard type thing, and you had very few questions to answer and that took care of it.

BL: Why do you suppose that there has been such a drastic change?

KL: Because I think a lot of the information that we had to garner really wasn't that important.

BL: Oh.

KL: Government. [Laughing]

BL: [laughing] Okay. How long did you end up staying in the Sacajawea Hotel?

KL: Well, we left there in 1970, so it would have been about 15 years that we were there and we'd looked around town for a new location to move to and there just wasn't anything large enough to handle the situation. So we owned property where the tower was located on Cove Avenue and we built a modular building there, and we moved into that in 1970; and incidentally uh, it took us two weeks to build that. There was a gentleman in Elgin that, [cause we're right] boy we were having to move from the Hotel because they were already dismantling plumbing and that sort of thing, so we had to move in a hurry and we had two weeks in which to get out. And I remember Ivan Tillary said "I can have the building up for you in two weeks". And he did, and we moved out and I don't think we lost more than eight hours of air time to make the move.

BL: How disappointing was that to leave the Hotel where you had really been the center of attention in that building?

KL: Well, we were really outgrowing the area, so it was sort of a necessity to move because we needed more space and then subsequently we put the FM on the air and we just wouldn't have had room for that. So, mixed emotions about that.

BL: Can you say anything about your personal view of them tearing down the Hotel?

KL: Well, the floor in the lobby was [uh] made of marble, as well as steps up to the mezzanine, and they would bring the pipes from the plumbing up the; what seven or eight floors; bring it down to the lobby and just drop it, and it made a horrendous noise, and of course all of that went on the air if we had a microphone open. So I remember that, and I also remember seeing caterpillars on like the second or third floor, up there tearing things out and to think of the strength of the building, and it took a lot longer to bring the building down than they thought it would simply because of the structure, and I think if that were to happen today people would not allow it to be torn down.

BL: Uh um. Was there a sense of sadness in the community?

KL: Oh I think so. Ya, because it was quite a landmark actually, and so [uh] then of course they had the coffee shop also, and had the, what they called The Large and The Small Ball Rooms, and the Large Ballroom is where they would hold dances, the Small Ballroom, if it was a small dance, but they would also serve the Rotary Club and Lions Club there too.

BL: Uh um. So a lot of activity ceased at that time?

KL: Oh yes, you bet. Too bad!

BL: Uh um, it is. So let's switch over to the Cove building. [Uh] what was it like out there moving into a new building?

KL: Well it was exciting, like any other new place you move into. And of course, we had more room. We eventually put the FM station on, there an FM station went on the air and they were not successful so I bought the equipment and everything and we put that on the air. We did have to add on a room for that even there, and it was really exciting and for the first couple of years we programmed beautiful music, which I loved, Western back then and that's what we had, what we programmed then on the FM.

BL: Tell me what the difference is between AM and FM?

KL: AM is audio modulation and FM is frequency modulation. And don't ask me further questions I don't know.

BL: Okay. Well I don't know what the means either. Was there a difference as far as running the business between the two types of radio?

KL: Not really, because you sold advertising for both and you had sales people that sold both stations and the commercials that you put together were used on both stations, or could be, and so the operation was the only thing that was different. The FM was automated and the AM you had an operator and announcer there, and so other than that I don't know what made the difference.

BL: Was there any difference in the types of music played?

KL: Oh ya. [uh] on the AM station we would broadcast what we called Adult Contemporary, and then at night more of the Rock music, where on the FM the first couple of years was like I say beautiful music, and then we changed to Country and that was what we broadcast all day long and into the evening.

BL: When you say beautiful music, give me an example.

KL: Montalvani, [?] would be one, I, others don't come to mind, but it was that type, it wasn't classical by no means, but it was just beautiful music.

BL: Ken, you have many, many memories I suppose over the years with radio, can you tell me about some of the most memorable people or events?

KL: Well I think the most memorable people would have been Warren Curry who is our Chief Engineer, and [uh] Bob Mask, who I had mentioned earlier, he was our local news man, and of course the rest of the staff were very good people and [uh] did a good job for me, but both Warren and Bob worked for me much longer than anyone else. So, they were two nice guys and would do anything for you. Um, I guess I don't think of anything specific, other then the fact that radio was something that I enjoyed tremendously and I



remember coming to La Grande, I tell you I was on cloud nine because “I was radio”. There was three theaters here in La Grande when I came here and the Liberty Theater, which is where Dominos is now, and the other little business there, and [uh] they had a large stage and we would broadcast amateur programs from there, give away turkeys at Christmas and Thanksgiving, and I always had the pleasure of a lot of things that were a lot of fun.

BL: Uh um.

KL: Good memories.

BL: Now speaking of important people, we have eluded to your wife throughout this interview so we haven’t really discussed her very much, and so tell me about this special person in your life and how you think you know her?

KL: I was selling advertising at the time, as well as doing a shift on the board, there was a little ladies shop called “The Rosanna Shop, Ladies Ready to Wear”, and I serviced that account, whoever resides and sold them advertising and the manager there said I would like you to meet the lady or the girl that works here. Well, it happened to be Francis Elam, who I called Frankie, and we had a date or several and after seven months got married, and then have been married now for 38 years; 58 years, I’m sorry 58 years. I thought it seemed like 38 you know.

BL: Oh that’s a nice thing to say. [Laughs] and did you have children?

KL: We had two sons. Gary and Roger. Gary is in La Grande, works at the River Bend, it’s a youth alliance, I believe is what they call it, and [uh] our younger son Roger is with Piper Jaffrey in Portland.

BL: Did they have any desire to get on the radio with dad?

KL: Oh ya. Roger came to me one day when he was a senior and he said, “Dad I would really like to be a radio announcer”, I said well Roger, you have to really be able to read well in order to be an announcer, and he said “Okay”, and I said when you think you’re ready why put an audition tape on my desk. He did and I was surprised that he did as well as he did, so he worked for me for I think a couple of years and then went to Nampa, Idaho, to KFXD. [Uh] Gary did some sales work for me. When Bob Mask would be on vacation why Gary would fill in as the news man and he also did the secretarial work when the secretary was gone. This would be typing up the program logs and putting the commercials on that and so forth; they both did a good job.

BL: Did you ever Frankie on the air?

KL: No I don’t think so.

BL: No?

KL: No, I don’t believe so. [Pause]

BL: I have a note to the editor here, we want to go back and make a little addition to the part about the owners of Inland Radio Group.

BL: And just as a side note here, you had mentioned earlier that Gordon Caps was a great guy and you wanted us to mention that he still is.

KL: Ya. He still lives in Ontario, [and uh] don’t hear from him often, but occasionally, [tape pause]

BL: Ken, you mentioned that you had such a large part of your life dedicated to radio and to your business, but that certainly wasn’t all that you did, you were very, very busy; can you tell me about some of the things that you were involved in?

KL: Well I received a few awards and was involved with a variety of clubs and organizations. [um] received Man of the Year award from the La Grande Union County Chamber of Commerce in 1971, the Distinguished Citizen Award from the La Grande JC’s, that was in 1957, [uh] o served on the Board of Directors of the Salvation Army, the Red Cross

and I chaired the blood program for the Red Cross for a number of years. I was a member of the Elks Logs and the La Grande Lions Club, member of the First Christian Church and held numerous offices there, [um] sang in the Choir for over 50 years, I recorded two religious albums, I did a number of Concerts, Sermons, and songs and solos and sang for hundreds of Funerals and a number of Weddings.

BL: Do you still sing today?

KL: No, unfortunately I had a neurological problem pop up about six years ago and it took my singing voice. I guess that about wraps that up.

BL: Okay. [Uh]Let me just ask you a couple of questions about these.

KL: Okay.

BL: What was your motivation for your leadership in all of these organizations, such as the blood program and the Salvation Army? It seems that you weren't just a volunteer, that you really [you really] had prestigious positions with them.

KL: Well I don't know. [Laughing] you get involved with community things, organizations and all, and there is a need and you fill it to be elected or appointed chairman of something, or president, why you said sure you would do it, and I guess I thought I could handle the job.

BL: Do you think you were more aware about these things on because of your roll in radio?

KL: Oh definitely.

BL: So that definitely impacted your life?

KL: You bet.

BL: Okay. And then I need to ask just a few more questions about your involvement in the church. Fifty years on the Choir, that is quite an achievement, [uh] as well as all of the other things, but tell me about some of the changes that occurred within the church, I understand that maybe you were in a couple of different buildings over that time.

KL: Yes. My wife and I first started going to the Christian Church it was still on Penn Avenue, but about, on I don't know four or five blocks East of there, and then we built the building that we are currently in, The First Christian Church. And we were involved in the building of the Church, of the building itself. My wife I know did some of the painting and sanding and that sort of thing, and I took a number of movies on the progress on the building, and ya, there has been a lot of changes made. I don't know that I could really enumerate all of them, but it's been a big part of my wife and my lives.

BL: Do you think it's also a big part of, I guess others in Union County, is it what makes La Grande a special place, or is it really not related in your opinion?

KL: You mean the Churches?

BL: Uh um.

KL: Well I'm sure that they have their place in the community and [uh] probably makes La Grande a nicer place to live.

BL: Thank you for that. As you kind of reflect on your life in Union County, is there anything else that's sort of on the top of your head that you would like to discuss?

KL: Nothing really comes to mind particularly.

BL: Do you suppose that you would ever want to redo any of that or live anywhere else or have you been pleased with your time in Union County?

KL: I think that La Grande has been very good to me and I don't think I would change my life or my life's work at all because I enjoyed radio and I enjoyed serving in the community. [Uh] singing has been a big part of my life and [uh] something that might be of interest, I don't know, I went to a radio broadcast school in Beverly Hills, California, one of the instructors moved to Portland to run a Broadcast School there and she said "were going to get you a job in radio", so I decided to leave on the bus that afternoon about five o'clock, the first thing I did that morning, probably around eight or nine, was to mail some letters in the post office and I was hurrying down the steps and I turned my ankle,

pulled two ligaments and fell of course, well I delayed my going to Portland for a month, but you know if that hadn't of happened I probably would never have come to La Grande before Thanksgiving. I did get a job a KVAN in Vancouver, Washington, and, but that lasted just a week because staff announcer was ill, and then I got the opportunity to come to La Grande, but you see if I had been in Portland a month earlier that would not have happened, it was sort of a coincidence I guess.

BL: Well I think it sounds to me like it wasn't really an accident you were supposed to be here.

KL: I believe your right. Yep.

Sunday 6, 2005

Side 1 Starting time 5:00

Ending time 6:45

Side 2 Starting time 6:45

Ending time 8:00