

H98-35

The Don McCune Library



PRESERVING OUR NORTHWEST HERITAGE

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September 22, 1998

Robyn Russell
Alaska & Polar Regions Dept.
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library
PO Box 756808
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6808

Dear Robyn:

Here is a VHS dub of a 30-minute interview with Don McCune on January 18, 1982 at a local community college: Bellevue Community College. Don is being interviewed about his broadcast career, which included 9 years in Fairbanks on KFAR radio and TV, 1949 to March 1957. I am not sure when KFAR TV went on the air, but Don was its first manager. He tells on the tape how he got the job...he was the only radio person who had seen a TV!

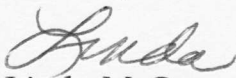
The interviewer, Marty Wilson, was also a long-time broadcast producer and talent here in the Seattle area, as well as a longtime friend of Don's. In her retirement, she did this program series.

While listening to the tape, I heard Don say something that may sound negative about his time in Alaska, which certainly is not the case, as Marty later asks him about. He was indeed anxious to leave Alaska when he did because of his then-wife's drinking problem, which he did not, of course, say on the air. (The move to Seattle did not fix her problem and they later divorced.)

Having been married to him for almost 25 years, I know that he returned often to Alaska to film during his 21-year "Exploration Northwest" series here in Seattle because he loved Alaska and never got it out of his system...and he truly thought of himself as an Alaskan. Of the over 400 TV programs produced for "Exploration Northwest", at least 50 were filmed in Alaska, and 25 still exist. The earlier 25 were thrown away due to storage limitations at the TV station!

I will enclose a catalog listing my efforts so far to preserve Don's many works during his 50-year broadcast career.

Sincerely,


Linda McCune