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From the SelectedWorks of Erin Passehl-Stoddart

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Boise's Basque Radio Program

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Boise's Basque Radio Program

Erin Passehhl
Basque Museum
February 28, 2011
Basque Radio Shows in the Western U. S.

- Boise
- Elko
- Buffalo
Station KBBS premiered *Euskaldun Ordua* ("Basque Hour") on the air from 1956-2000

- Aired Sundays 12:00-1:00
- Notable differences:
  - Advertisements sponsored solely by local Basques
  - Nine volunteer commentators working together on weekly broadcasts
  - Inducted into Society of Basque Studies in America Hall of Fame (1997)
Basque Radio Show – Elko, NV

- Broadcast from 1968-1980
- *The Basque Program* aired on Sundays from 12:00-1:00

- Notable difference: Catholic Mass in Basque repeated on the show each week
Basque Radio Show – Boise, ID

- The Basque Program aired from circa 1952-1984
- Aired weekly; station, days of the week and times changed over time
- Notable differences:
  - First Basque radio show in U.S.
  - One volunteer host at a time working on the show
  - Strong signal throughout western states, not just local
Growth in Basque Institutions

- Basque groups in Boise growing, for immigrants, sheepherders and Basque speaking members of the community

Some examples include:
- Basque Girls Club
- La Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos
- Basque boardinghouses
Growth in Basque Culture

- Growing interest in Basque culture in Boise
  - 1949 & 1950 Boise Music Week
  - Building of the Basque Center in 1949-1950
Launching of Boise’s *Basque Program*

- Idea for Basque radio show came from Dar Dodds and Julian Lachiondo (first host), circa 1952.
- Show began airing on Sunday nights from 8:00-8:30 p.m. on KDSH (changed to KBOI-AM in 1955) in Boise.
- As a musician, Julian owned lots of Basque music LPs that he used on the show.
The Basque Program Format

Radio Show Format

Music
- Basque and Spanish songs (traditional, popular, etc.)
- Listener requests

Social
- Birthdays, anniversaries, deaths

Information
- News, events
- Sports scores
- Weather reports
Second host: Cecil Jayo

- Around 1955, Cecil Jayo begins volunteering as host
- Live shows broadcast from KBOI studio
- Aired on Monday evenings at 8:00 p.m.
- When Cecil had summers off, Espe filled in, and vice-versa later on
The Basque Program: Listeners

“The Basque Program] brought an hour of enjoyment to those who were making the transition to the American way of life.”

– Teddy Khteian-Keeton

Local (Boise Valley) → Split Audience → Sheepherders

Western states (Canada to Mexico) → Split Audience → New immigrants

Basque speakers living in the U.S. → Split Audience →
Third Host: Espe Alegria

- Espe was host first on KGEM for 1 year, then on KBOI for 26 years (1955-1982)
- Known as the "Voice of the Basques" among her listeners
- Longest running host according to local historians and arguably most successful because of her social and immigration connections
Espe’s Translation and Immigration Services

“I am always busy. I never know what I’m going to be doing from one day to the next...[I’ll] get a call from the federal court to be an interpreter for a new arrival, or to help an alien resident with his or her citizenship papers...Or [I] will be asked to translate a will from Basque or Spanish to English.”

– Espe

Radio hosts Espe Alegria and Cecil Jayo visited with sheepherders in their camps to assist with their immigration paperwork or bring them supplies.
Last Host: Inaki Eiguren

- First broadcast on KBOI on September 5, 1982
- Show aired Sunday nights from 10:30-11:00
- Received financial donations from Euzkaldunak, Inc.
BASQUE RADIO PROGRAM ENDS:

The management of KBOI Radio Station recently ended the Basque Radio Program heard each Sunday evening. Our appreciation to Inaki Eiguren for his dedication to the show that was enjoyed by many, many Basques. It will be missed.
What Evidence Remains Today

- **Espe’s Basque Music Collection** (music LPs and tapes, taped radio shows)
  - Owned hundreds of albums of traditional and unique Basque music used on radio show
  - Donated them to ISHS before her death
  - First Basque Music Archive in United States
- **Recent donation of Inaki’s shows**
Thanks for Attending!

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