

An Oral History Interview with

**RICHARD DALE BROWNING**

BY

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## THE LIFE OF RICHARD DALE BROWNING

The person I did my Oral History Interview on is Richard Dale Browning. He was born in Grand Junction, Colorado in 1912. He is seventy five years old. He is my Grandfather.

As a child, he lived in Grand Junction, Colorado in a small three-bedroom house. He got his water from a cistern located in his yard. They didn't have a heater, and they got their heat from coal. On very cold mornings they loved to sit by their fireplace to keep warm. His family did not have a telephone, so they couldn't call their friends. They had no electricity, so they had to use kerosene lamps and candles when it was dark. They also didn't have indoor plumbing and so they had to use an outhouse. My grandfather did not like to go outside and use the outhouse when it was winter.

When he was young, his mother and father repaired his clothing. Since he was the youngest of four children, he often got hand-me-down clothes. His mother cleaned his clothes on a washboard and hung them out to dry. Even though he doesn't remember any special toys he had, he knows that most of their toys were handmade. His father was an excellent carpenter and made him things to play with.

The foods that he remembered eating as a child were meat, potatoes, vegetables, watermelon, cantaloupe and corn. His mother made great pies. Some of her special recipes were her fried potatoes and chicken fried steak and country gravy.

His family grew most of their own vegetables and raised chickens, pigs and beef for food. They also obtained some of their food from the market where their father was a clerk. The food was part of his salary.

He started school at the age of six. When he was young, they did not have preschool or kindergarten. High school started in the tenth grade. He graduated from Long Beach Polytechnic High School in Long Beach, California. All his children also graduated from the same school. During high school, he received many awards in public speaking and athletics. He received the most awards for playing baseball. After his high school graduation, he went to business college for a year. He also took a correspondence course in accounting from La Salle Correspondence School. The price of college varied in price greatly from school to school. He would have liked to have the money and time to go to four years of college.

He has been very active in clubs and organizations his entire life. Some of the many clubs he has been active in include the Tuna Club, Yacht Club, Board of Directors of the Boy's Club, Cub Scouts, Chamber of Commerce, President of Motor Car Dealers Association, Community Chest and Kiwanis Club. He joins more clubs and organizations every year.

When he was young, money was scarce. They were never in want and always had plenty to eat. During the Depression, he was to have emergency surgery and spent six weeks in the hospital. He used all his money on the hospital bill. So, he went to Colorado and worked with his uncle for one year. During the entire year he made only one dollar after room and board.

During the year 1933, he was living in Long Beach during the 1933 earthquake. Damage was great to his home that he was forced to go and live with his sister. The quake did lots of damage to the place where his parents worked and he spent lots of time helping friends and neighbors clean up from the quake. He has never experienced a tornado or hurricane. He has seen and been in many different snowstorms.

During his lifetime, he has experienced many wars. He remembers World War I and World War II. During the war, he worked on Army and Navy cars as his service duty. He has never been on active duty.

He has been hospitalized many times. He has seen the cost of medical care rise a great deal each year. He has had major surgery five different times. When he was young, the most common illnesses were measles, mumps, chickenpox, scarlet fever and polio. Doctors made house calls when he was a child. Children did not go to the doctor as often as they do now.

The first time he flew in an airplane was when he was twenty one years old. He remembers it was an Aero Commander. He doesn't remember the first time he heard a radio, but he said his family use to all sit around and listen to the radio together. The first family car they had was a 1922 Maxwell. It cost six hundred dollars which was a lot of money in those days. There were cars when he was young, but many people still used horses and wagons for transportation.

When they traveled by car, the amount of time it took depended on the conditions of the roads. He said he has been very fortunate in being able to do a lot of traveling in his lifetime. He has been to Europe, Asia, Alaska, Hawaii and most of the other states in the U.S.A. When he was young, he remembers going fishing with his older sister and her husband.

When he was living in Colorado, he remembers celebrating all the main holidays with his family. When he was just starting school, he had holidays we don't celebrate today. Birthdays were very important family gatherings. Although he didn't get many presents as a young child, birthdays were very happy times for his family. Usually the family would celebrate with a picnic with all the cousins and other relatives.

Church played a very important part in his life. As a child he remembers attending the Methodist church. Sundays were very special days and the entire family would get together after church on Sunday and have huge picnics and everyone would bring food. Many times they would make homemade ice cream and everyone would join in playing games.

As a youngster, sports were very important to him. He loved to play basketball, football, baseball and ran track. Baseball was his favorite sport and Lou Gehrig of the New York Giants was his most admired athlete. He still enjoys going to see baseball games.

Guy Lombardo is his favorite musical group. His favorite books to read are detective stories, western stories and historical novels. He still loves to read and it is an important part of his daily life.

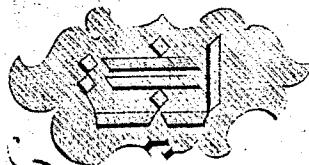
The biggest changes he has seen in his life is in the area of politics. He remembers some Presidents were not very effective in the way they attempted to run the government.

He said that he has had a great life. He has eight grandchildren and enjoys spending time with each of them. Family vacations are very special to him. He has indeed accomplished many things in his lifetime. My grandfather is indeed a great man that I admire very much.

My grandfather lives in Long Beach, California today. I like the chances I have to visit with him.

# Polytechnic High School

Long Beach, California



It is known that **Richard Dale Browning**  
has completed with credit the course of study prescribed for  
graduation from this School and is therefore awarded this diploma

In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and  
affixed the seal of this School this 22nd day of

May of 1922

*David Buchanan*

*W. L. Stephens*

*W. L. Stephens*

*W. L. Stephens*





Richard and Verla Browning

Roger, Karen and Kent