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INTERVIEW WITH

HARRY L. BROWN

BY R. FRANKLIN THOMPSON

August 31, 1977

T: When were you born, Harry?

B: March 6, 1886.

T: Were you born in this area?

B: No, I was born in Centralia, Illinois.

T: What did your father do?

B: He was a railroad engineer. In the east he was with the Illinois Central and then he came west to Montana where he lived for four or five years and he worked for the Montana Central, which later the Northern Pacific took over. Then he came out to Tacoma and went to work for the Northern Pacific. When he retired, he was the engineer on passenger trains #1 and #2 between here and Portland.

T: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

B: I had three brothers and three sisters. The older was a railroad man also; he worked as a fireman with the Northern Pacific Railroad and then I had my brother, Charley, whom I think you knew, and a baby brother that was scalded to death.

T: Tell me, when did you start to be associated with the University of Puget Sound?
B: My recollection is that Dr. Todd came to our Fowler Methodist church some time in 1907 or 1908, I can't remember the exact year, and it was at the time he was getting people interested in the college, and he gave a nice talk and after the talk in the church he got us all to say, "Our University," and he was doing that all over the Conference, as I later learned. I think that was really my first, and it got me to thinking about the university.

T: When did you come on the Board?

B: That I can't tell you. I remember that between then and 1900 we gave them small pledges but I can't tell you how much. I have my check books back to 1926 and in 1926 I was on the Board and I was on the Building Committee for, I think, Jones Hall.

T: Well, you could very well have been because it was built something like 1922-23-24.

B: Then, I was on the Building Committee when we built Howarth Hall and also on the Committee that raised the $200,000 on the Jim Hill Challenge which was a $50,000 gift.

T: Do you remember that the Howarth Bequest was given to the City of Tacoma, to be used where the best use could be made, and were you involved in getting that to come to the University?

B: Yes, I think that was when I made my first pledge of any size. I find in my book on checking this morning that in 1926 I was paying on a pledge then, and between 1926 and 1930, I made another pledge of $10,000 and those pledges were
paid off during those years of 1926-30. The reason I didn't give a lot up until
1900 was because our salary was only $150 a month up until then.

T: Then you were involved in the Building Committee of Jones Hall and also
probably Howarth Hall.

B: Yes.

T: Didn't they build the basement of Howarth Hall first and they used it for
awhile and then put the top floors on afterwards.

B: Yes, that's right. Then, also, the architect that built Jones Hall gave the
money for the quadrangle—that was Mr. Sutton.

T: He had been around the world, and hadn't the trustees asked him to study
college buildings and come back and report?

B: Yes, he did. That's when they laid out the entire program for the University
of Puget Sound, how it was to be built and continued to be built upon.

T: That's right. The only difference is that we don't have arches all around
it because it cost so much. And also in his day he didn't have to arrange for
parking lots because students didn't have cars. Do you remember when Norton
Clapp first came on?

B: I have tried to think and I remember Norton Clapp followed Roe Shaub.

T: I mean when he first came on the Board.

B: Well, it was only a couple of years before that.

T: I remember talking with you a good many years ago and you said that you
used to see Norton Clapp playing volleyball up at the YMCA.
B: That's right.

T: You said he was a tall, young fellow, not quite as coordinated as he might have been, and I recall you said--check me now if this is not true-- that you thought he might be a good person to get on the Board, and you talked to him about coming on the Board originally. This would be in 19...well, something like 1932 or '35 or '37-- something along there.

B: It would have had to been then. I tell you who I talked with about it. It was Van---

T: Vander Ende?

B: Van, yes.

T: We will be talking with him. Clapp just came on, then, as a regular member of the Board and it wasn't too long till they made him Secretary.

B: That's right.

T: Then I remember when he got involved in the war and he asked to be relieved of that because he was with the Navy in the Exchange Building in Seattle, but his interest was very, very good. Tell me quite a bit about Dr. Todd's administration, you were probably the best acquainted with him of any man we have.

B: Well, he was a man who had a great vision and a very hard worker. He had a love for people.

T: It must have been very difficult to raise money in those days because there wasn't any income tax factor.
B: That's right.
T: I remember him telling me about getting money from Mrs. Jones, for instance, and she didn't have any tax break at all on that -- she just gave it.
B: In those days, when I gave $10,000, it was given outright.
T: Yes, right out of your pocket.
B: I wasn't making a lot of money in those days either. I never could have paid it off... anywhere from $200 to $600.
T: That's what made the University what it is today. Do you remember our conversation when I first came and you said what is the most needed for the University and would be the most difficult to get?
B: Yes, I do.
T: And we talked about sidewalks and pavement and you recall, of course, there wasn't a sidewalk on the campus, and the only pavement was in the Sutton Quadrangle in front of Jones Hall? That was when you suggested that we have the Harry Brown Family Roads and Paths Fund, and every square foot of paving and every square foot of sidewalk has been done by you and your family and what a wonderful, thrilling thing that has been. Actually, you have kept the kids out of the mud and it has just been wonderful. There is a new sidewalk that has been put in by the chapel---- so people coming from Puget Sound Street and that area can go across the campus without getting wet feet.
But I remember that you said you wanted to do the thing that would be the most difficult for us to do and yet would be the most helpful, and...
B: There was one other thing, too. In looking over my books, I find it brought back to my memory that I was very much interested in the athletics. At that time, the University of Puget Sound often took the team from one place to another and I made little gifts for this. Also, I notice where I bought a cup for one of the awards. And that was when I got interested, I think, when we built the first Tennis Courts.

T: You built the first two and they are still there and still going strong.

B: Then I think we put half on the second...

T: Yes, that's right. Then, of course, there is the Brown Quadrangle which...

B: That was later, yes.

T: That was a real thrill when we dedicated that. I remember we had a covering on the plaque which read that it was donated by you and your family and everyone took a hold of the rope and they pulled—down to the grandchildren—little, tiny grandchildren—and it was really a very very wonderful moment.

B: Yes:

T: Let's talk about the President's house. Do you remember the speech you made to the trustees?

B: At a trustee meeting, we were discussing the president's house and the thought came to me during the meeting that why shouldn't the Board of Directors have a project of their own and build that, and that was what I
proposed—that the Board of Directors do it and we got subscriptions from them for, I think, $30,000 and of course it cost just about double that.

T: You made quite a speech and said, "I would like to pass this paper around and see what would happen." And actually, it got $32,000. Then you remember that Norton Clapp got it and he said "I'll match it dollar for dollar." So out of that meeting, where you made that speech, came $64,000 and the house cost $90,000, and the furnishings were beside that. You were the one that actually started that.

Going back, I was trying to remember exactly what happened, as I had no idea this was going to happen at the Board of Trustee meeting. You said, "We brought this young man here to follow Dr. Todd, and Dr. Todd had his own house. We promised him we would build him a house, and a year or two has gone by and we haven't done anything about it and I think we have a moral obligation to carry out our promise. For that reason, I would like to pass this paper around and see what happens."

I was very much surprised when we got the kind of response we did. It was wonderful. Of course, that house, Harry, has been marvelous. Lucille designed it and furnished it, and we had 10,000 people there every year. And we tried to have every student in and if a student was homesick, I would say, "Come on over and we'll have a bowl of soup." Really, those kids used to clean out the refrigerator every week. (Laughter)

B: It has been a great pleasure for us to watch the growth of the college.
T: It's been a great thrill, hasn't it?

B: Oh, it's been wonderful. And it's a thing that our children--you see we have not only had all of our five children attend the college but our grandchildren, right up until this last year.

T: That's right. I think I told you I met Jerry Boyd.

B: Yes, he spoke about it--he was so pleased that you recognized him.

T: I was kind of surprised for there were three or four Sigma Chi's, I think it was, all there, and I said, "Good heavens, what are you doing, having a Sigma Chi meeting?" He said, "No, I came over here on a real estate deal and Jerry is going to take me around and show me--he's involved in it." It was so thrilling and it was like the success of your own young people.

All of your children did attend? Did your oldest son go to UPS, too?

B: Oh sure, he took his pre-med......Harry......at UPS and then went to Chicago, the University of Chicago.

T: Don is a doctor, too.

B: All the children graduated from UPS except Al. Al took his first two years at the University and he was taking up business and he felt he could get his last two years and what he wanted at Stanford.

T: How many children and grandchildren have gone here, do you know?

B: I don't know. Al's daughters, all but one, I think, attended some, and then Mildred's three -- Bob, Jerry, and Janet. Harry wasn't here. I don't
think any of Don's went here. Oh yes, Steve and Tom went to the University.

T: Don played basketball.
B: Yes, Don played basketball.

T: Dick played both basketball and football.
B: Yes, that's right.

T: And did very, very well.

Do you recall any unusual Board of Trustee meetings?

B: I haven't thought of that for so long.

T: It seems like we were always authorizing another building and that sort of thing. We were, of course, very closely related to the Methodist Conference.

B: I think maybe the one I remember most was the one when you decided to come. We needed someone so bad to follow Dr. Todd and we were so thrilled to have you come.

T: Do you remember if you had a good many meeting about this before this?
B: Yes.

T: Did Dr. Todd decide on his own volition that it was time for someone to follow him? He must have been in his eighties, wasn't he?
B: Yes, I think that more or less he did. He was thinking about it and the Board was thinking about someone to replace him because of his age.

T: Do you remember some of the men who came? Do you remember someone by the name of Nyles from a Methodist school in Iowa?
B: Yes, I remember.
T: I guess it finally got to the place where the Board was deciding between the two of us.

B: Yes.

T: He had raised $100,000 for the school in Iowa, so I kept hearing, "don't count on it because he has a reputation for raising money."

B: To be honest with you, Dr. Thompson, I think one of the main reasons (and there were several of us on the Board) was that we were trying to hold ourselves to a religious school, and we knew that you were active down in Willamette and all of your recommendations were so high that we were just thrilled when we knew that you were coming.

T: It was a very interesting decision for Lucille and myself, because we were being invited to go as Dean at Ohio Wesleyan, and it was a question of going there or coming here, and I listened to Bishop Baxter quite a little bit. Of course, he was on the Board and he didn't know exactly what would happen or if it would come or not. I remember Mr. Dix Rowland called me and said he and Mr. Blaine wanted to come down to see us. When I hung up the phone, I called Bishop Baxter and I asked him what this meant and he said, "Well, there is no doubt but what they are coming down to ask you to come up."

B: What was the man's name down at Ostrander?

T: E.S. Collins.

B: He was also very interested in your coming.
T: Collins was a very interesting person. I used to preach in First Church at Portland every once in awhile and so one time I went to his office and he said, "You know, I am on both Boards. While all my young people have gone to Willamette, I think Puget Sound has a tremendous future." I was vice president of Willamette at that time, and I said, "Tell me why?" And he said, "Well, it has the location, it has the potential and all it needs is leadership." I asked a lot of questions, then, because he was on both Boards and in many cases, he sort of kept the College of Puget Sound in those early days.

B: I remember him as being an outstanding man, and we were thrilled when he would come to the Board meetings--he couldn't always get there but he was at most of them.

T: He was a man who sat there and listened and when a crisis came along he would say well you only need this, I'll go half if you raise half, and there are three or four cases in the history of the University where he did that.

B: There were times when nobody else gave and he gave, too, when they really needed it.

T: He actually underwrote a pension system for all the Methodist missionaries. He gave millions of dollars to the Pension Board to underwrite the pensions. His grandson is now on the board, and he goes back to Philadelphia for those meetings and sees that the Collins money is properly spent.

B: In looking over my old checkbooks, (I have a book for 1926 to 1930 with...
just gifts in it) and we were in those days giving to that fund, and the missionary fund was raised on the outside, then, too.

T: That's right. Well, Harry, you have been a wonderful, wonderful trustee; your family has been wonderfully loyal and I appreciate very much talking with you. We don't seem to have covered very much, and I wonder if there are other things you would like to cover.

B: In regard to the University of Puget Sound, my thought has always been that our young people, along with their education, needed a Christian education. And they got that from some wonderful professors at the University of Puget Sound.

T: Do you remember some special professors?

B: Davis--Senator Davis. I can't remember their names now, but I knew them all from the early days--there was Slater, and...

T: Weir, Hanawalt...

B: Yes, Hanawalt was marvelous.

T: Martin, who belonged to Mason.

B: Yes, Martin.

T: He was a retired Methodist missionary.

Harry, part of your great support of the University has been a part of your tithe. When did you start tithing?

B: I started the very week that I was converted at Little Fowler Church in 1905. I was working in the candy business, making $17.50 a week. The week
that I was converted, the next Sunday I dumped $1.75 in the collection plate, and the good Lord has kept me at it ever since.

T: Were you working in some candy factory? Or was this your own business?

B: No, at that time I was working in a candy factory. Three years after, in 1907, I started my own little retail store up on Boardway. I started that September 10, 1907. My wife worked for me as a clerk. We were married in January, 1918, because I couldn't afford to pay her wages anymore! (laughter) And the first year, out of that little store we drew $25 a month. And we tithed. We did not keep open on Sunday and we found that I needed more business than we were going to get out of the retail store, so I started looking for two or three stores that I could make candy for, and after doing that for about a year, I found out that that was the better end of the business and gradually worked into the wholesale business.

T: What was the name of the business?

B: Oriole Candy Company.

T: When did Brown and Haley start?

B: I built a little factory on East 27th Street, a one-story building, 120 feet deep. I started in the wholesale business during that period I had two or three salesmen, and it was hard to keep salesmen. Mr. Haley used to call me to sell me extracts. I proved to him one day that the extract that I was using was better and giving me a better strength in the candy than the ones that he was selling. That got him interested and he kept wanting to buy into
the business. In 1914 I sold him a full half-interest. That was the start, then, of Brown and Haley.

T: You manufactured it then and he sold it?

B: Yes.

T: Then you started a Rogers Candy Company in Seattle after you sold out.

B: In 1944, because of the fact that my son, Al, had come into the business and Mr. Haley had brought two of his sons into the business, and they were not getting along together, it was decided to buy or sell and I sold it to him.

T: When did you make Almond Roca? You made that personally, didn't you?

B: Yes, that was in 1925.

T: That candy in World War II was one of the most acceptable and sent all over the world.

B: All over the world, yes. And the Mountain Bar was my concoction.

T: They have a regular one, a cherry one, and a peanut butter one, now.

B: Peanut butter--that's a new one. But the Mountain Bar and Cherry Bar were both mine.

T: It's wonderful to have you on the Board of Trustees. You are an honorary member now, but Dick is in your place. He is very much interested and he helps on the committees and he is very fine. Who are some of the earlier trustees that you remember?

B: Dix Rowland, Arthur Lister, Billy Hopping, and George Scofield.

T: George Scofield, you said, was interested financially and he made a major
pledge?

B: Yes, I think it was $25,000. In those days that was a big sum of money. I think that inspired me to give the $10,000 pledge in 1926.

T: Wasn't Lister secretary of the school board and also secretary of the Board of Trustees?

B: Yes.

T: He sort of maneuvered the sale of the old campus to the school board, didn't he?

B: Yes, he did.

T: Do you remember anything about that?

B: No, I do not, because that was really done before I was on the board.

T: You don't remember when they moved from Division Avenue?

B: Yes, I do, I remember the march that was made from the old campus to the new campus.

T: What did they do? What was it like?

B: Oh, I don't remember exactly, except it was a march and everybody was thrilled and happy--singing songs as they marched along.

T: One of the men yesterday told me they carried two little holly trees and those are the two holly trees at the entrance to the campus now. There were two beech trees, too, and one of them got broken in a snow storm a few years ago. Let's see now, who are some other trustees? Was Mumaw on at that time?

B: Yes.
T: And how about Newbegin?
B: Jim Newbegin.
T: Newbegin was mayor at one time, wasn't he?
B: Yes, he was mayor.
T: Mumaw had a telephone company in the Grays Harbor area.
B: As I said, George Scofield.
T: There was a Hopping?
B: Billy Hopping.
T: The Savings and Loan man?
B: He was the Tacoma Savings and Loan and he started the Tacoma Savings and Loan.
T: It was a smaller Board in those days, wasn't it?
B: Much smaller. It seems to me we only had about eight or ten members.
T: Do you remember any of the ministers who were on it?
B: LaViollette.
T: That was Fred Pedersen's father-in-law.
B: Yes, I knew LaViollette very well. It seems to be in those days the District Superintendent of Tacoma District was always on the board.
T: I think that's right. There was a... what was his name...?
B: Oh, yes. I think his name was Selliger, sorry but I cannot think what it is for sure.
T: Gerald... I had his funeral and his daughter said to me, as we
left the cemetery, "You know, I used to hate that school with a passion."
I said, "Why?" She said, "When I was a little girl and I would get a hole in the sole of my shoe, and I would tell my dad I needed some new shoes, he would say, 'Honey, we'll have to put some paper in there. We have to give the money to the school.'"

B: He was fine man.
HARRY BROWN ROADS AND PATHS FUND

Mr. Harry Brown, who has been Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees for many years, has been one of the most wonderful supporters of the University of Puget Sound. He gives a regular portion of his tithe to the University.

Many years ago, when I first came, about in 1944, he said to me one day, "What is one of the things that you need help on most that is onerous, that you have real difficulty in getting help with and that would be a great deal of service to the students, to the University and to you personally?"

At that time, we had no paving on the campus except the Sutton Quadrangle. We had no cement sidewalks. There was a trail that went from Jones Hall over to the Girls Gymnasium. There was a wooden sidewalk which got slick every time it rained between Jones Hall and the Girls Gymnasium.

I pointed out that most often the students were walking in the rain and in the mud; that the paving was chucky and had big holes in it and needed constant repair and that if Harry Brown and his family could establish a Roads and Paths Fund, to be called the Harry Brown Roads and Paths Fund, it would be one of the finest things that could happen. This money could be used to build sidewalks, to pave roads for the University and it would really make the campus beautiful and keep the students out of the mud and keep their feet dry.

So the Harry Brown Roads and Paths Fund was started and it has paid for all the cement sidewalks and most of the paving on the campus.
I recall that one of the first administrative acts I had to do in 1942 when I came was to treat a boy who had fallen off a bridge in the ravine between the Girls Gym and Lawrence. He had ridden his bicycle over this little bridge and had fallen off and had a laceration on his forehead. I suggested that we have a doctor take a look at it, stitch it up and that then we should fix the bridge.

To this day, there is a little indentation in the pavement which you can notice as you drive from the Girls Gym to Lawrence Street, just below the cottage and New Hall. This is where the ravine was filled in and the earth has sunk three or four inches. This pavement will crack one day and it will have to be repaved because of the gradual settling of the earth fill underneath.

The Harry Brown Fund has provided all the paving and sidewalks and Mr. Brown would like to have us construct a "Prayer Garden" which would be located in the area between the President's residence and the girls dormitories, in relationship to Kilworth Chapel. We would like to do this as early as we can and it would be paid for out of the Brown Roads and Paths Fund.

R. Franklin Thompson
Circa 1970