

BIO FOR J. DARWIN GUNNELL

Preferred Nickname: JD Birthplace: Snowville, Box Elder, Utah

Wife's Maiden Name: 1st: Olive Christopherson, born in Garland, Utah
2nd : Dorothy Condon

My Parents owned a 1420 acre dry farm in Howell, 20 miles west of Tremonton. Later they acquired 1280 acres of fertile land, planting Turkey Red Wheat as the major crop. We were taught to work.

At the age of thirteen I was struck by lightning while on a horse with my brother who was killed along with the horse. I was knocked unconscious but soon recovered. I was unable to walk for a few days but gradually I was able to walk normally. I was left with no physical handicap.

I graduated from Bear River High School in May 1933 and from 3 years of Seminary in 1932. Enrolled at Utah State Agricultural College and attended for 2 years. Was then called on a 2 year Mission to Western States Mission, HQ in Denver, Colorado. Served as President of the East Nebraska District, and also as Mission Secretary. I had the pleasure of meeting many of the Church Authorities, including Heber J. Grant, David O. McKay, J. Reuben Clark, of the First Presidency and Several Apostles. I drove the lead car from the train depot to North Omaha, with the 1st Presidency in the back seat and the Mission President seated by me. We were going to the dedication of the Monument honoring the 600 pioneers who died in the winter of 1846-47.

During the second world war, I was called and signed up to serve in the U.S. Navy. However, 4 days before my departure, the Japanese surrendered and I was not required to report.

On July 5, 1939 I married my H.S. sweetheart in the Logan Temple and soon settled on the 1400 acre dry farm and 60 acre irrigated farm. After 3 years it became evident that she was not happy with farm life and confided her feelings to me. An opportunity for me to enter the Business World as a tire store owner presented itself, and we took it. I opened a tire store in Mesa, Arizona and was active in the business for 53 years, expanding to 10 stores over the years. The first 20 years with the O.K. Tire Franchise and in 1962 would have ownership interest in 10 Big O Tire Stores.

On July 1, 1992 my wife Olive passed away with a major heart attack and a year later I married Dorothy Condon in the Arizona Temple.

I spent 2 years as a full time Missionary as a young man, and another 1 ½ years as a missionary couple with my wife Olive assigned to the St. George Temple visitors center and Brigham Young's winter Home. Also Jacob Hamblin Home.

Played baseball and softball. Played 2nd base on our Ward team in the All-Church Tournament in Salt Lake City.

I was ordained in the various steps in the Priesthood from Deacon to Bishop and have served in many and varied church callings, such as Full time Missionary, Ward Clerk; Elders Quorum President; Bishop's Counselor; Bishop; Director of Temple Visitors Center 10 years; Temple office for 18 years (Mesa and St. George).