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# PLAIN BROWN RAPPER

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News for the Tandy and Grace Brown Family

September, 1998



The picture is of the VFW Band, taken after the Memorial Day Parade in 1938. They are standing in front of the Capitol Building at 24<sup>th</sup> and Capitol Avenue. Directly in front of the Tuba player is Leah on the left and Frank on the right. Roy was the Director of the band and he is second from the right in the back row (no hat). Bob's father, Walter VanAlyne gave us the picture. He was the sponsor of the VFW Band.

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## FRANK REMEMBERS

Frank is the eighth child of Tandy and Grace Brown, born on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1923. He is one of the kindest, most generous people you could ever know and I will tell you just a little about him before I add his contribution to the September Plain Brown Rapper.

Frank was notorious for getting into trouble and for teasing us "little kids." Mother was always yelling

at him for real or imagined difficulties. But he survived his youth and came into his own in later life. When Frank was 18, World War II was upon us and he joined the Marine Corps. After basic training, he went to radio school and was a radio operator in a tank. He was sent with the Third Marines to fight in the South Pacific and was gravely wounded in the battle of Bougainville, a



tiny island in the Pacific Ocean. Frank was sent to the Hawaiian Islands to recover from his wounds. He stayed there for about 6 weeks and then returned to his unit in time to fight at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. I asked him why he didn't just come home. He certainly had every reason to. His reply was, "I needed to return to my unit." A true hero, dedicated to his cause. During the time Frank was gone, mother suffered constantly, she worried about him all the time. Roy was in the Army, having been activated with the 115<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regimental Band, Wyoming National Guard and was serving with an Army Band Unit at Fort Lewis, Washington. (I have asked him to please share some of those stories with us. Playing with Jack Benny and etc.) Betty's husband, Charlie Sylvester was in the Army, serving in the European Theater of Operation. There were three blue stars hanging in the window of 1717 Alexander, for Betty had come home to live during the war. At some point, I would like to do a complete newsletter on the life we led during World War II, everyone did their patriotic duty. Betty and Leonard worked at the Modification Center putting Nordin Bomb Sights in B-17 bombers. Mother was an "Air Raid Warden," hat, flashlight, armband and all.

When Frank came home from World War II, he was selected for the Veterans Education program and went to Fort Collins and attended Colorado A&M (now known as Colorado State University) where he received his Engineering Degree. Frank played in the University Band and was their drum major. In all the world, you never saw such a striking fellow as this tall, handsome Frank Brown in his shaker hat, leading the University Band down the street. He met and married Marilyn Lamb, and the rest is history. Frank is retired now, having served 25 years with the Illinois Department of Transportation and is still active in many community organizations. He does taxes for the Seniors, Boy Scouts, plays French Horn in the Symphony and Mellophone in an "Umpah" Band (German style). It is with great love that we write and laugh about Frank's antics, he is everyone's favorite person and I was thrilled when he sent his "memories" for the Rapper.

FROM FRANK: *The last Plain Brown Rapper was especially good, the story of Leah and Betty in the park was a jewel, every time I hear that story I laugh myself silly. Poor Dad, he was just playing a trick on the girls*

*and didn't think it would terrify them. He really felt bad about that. I came by my tendencies to try the same thing honestly.*

*Minnehaha Park was a great place to do stuff. We used to catch crawdads, harvest cattails, which we used for torches after they were soaked in oil, ice skate on the lake, and climb the big old Cottonwood trees across from the house. I remember the steps we nailed to the trunks of those trees to make them easier to climb. We would sit up there for a long time daydreaming. You could see a long distance from there. We used the playgrounds a lot and ate picnic lunches at the tables in the park. There was seldom a dull moment when we lived in the house on Alexander the first time. I'll always remember the time when Wyman Graeber knocked Stuart down and Anna and Vivian chased him into his house. Anna yelled for Vivian to watch the front door and then she chased him through the house and Vivian caught him as he ran out the front door. Then there was the time when the lady who lived at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and Alexander hit Betty and Mom chased her into her house and the whole family stood in the yard while Mom read her the riot act.*

*The cow was pastured across the hill east of the house and Anna, Vivian, Roy and June used to milk the cows when Dad was out. Mom had her chickens where the garage was later built. I remember one time when we had hominy for supper, I hated it and was not going to eat it, Mom told me that I was going to sit there until I had finished it. I had a paper sack which I carried my lunch in, it was the perfect size for sandwiches and when I found one I would use it until it wore out. When Mom left the dining room to take some dishes out to the kitchen, I scooped the hominy into my lunch sack, stuck it in my pocket, announced to Mom that my plate was clean, went out to the chicken yard and fed it to the chickens, I never thought that I fooled Mom. I think she was just tired of me sitting there.*

*Do you remember when we hung out the wash on those cold, cold days and the clothes would freeze solid but after an hour or two they would be dry? I also remember bringing in the overalls which were frozen stiff and standing them up near a register until they thawed. Once in a while one of us would bring a friend home to a meal, Dad would look around the table and say to the visitor "You're not one of mine."*



*We had a lot of picnics at Lions' Park and on the few days that were hot enough we used to swim at the Kiwanis Beach.*

*I had a few experiences at Converse School. One in the first grade when Mom had to explain to the teacher that I was left handed, and that she was to stop trying to make me write with my right hand. My Palmer Method grades never did improve, it was not until I was in college that I began to write correctly. We all lived in fear of having to report to Mrs. Fincher, (she was the principal and a good friend of Mom's) however, one day I was pushed into the mud by a classmate. He ran, I knew that I couldn't catch him so I nailed him with a rock. I had to report to Mrs. Fincher's office, I had visions of the paddle with the holes in it and other paraphernalia common to Principal's offices. I was pleasantly surprised when none of the above were in evidence. She had me tell what happened and why, then told me she was going to tell Mom. I can't remember being punished for throwing the rock.*

*Shortly after that we moved to Bergman's Place, west of Cheyenne, I went to Gibson Clark for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, then to Central for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. It was at Bergman's I decided that I was being picked on and decided to run away. I told Mom, she agreed that it was a good idea, she called all of the kids and told them. They also agreed that it was a good idea. Mom asked if I wanted her to make some sandwiches to take along, I was still mad and said "No!" and started off to the west. Everyone called out "Goodby" and waved. Every time I looked back they waved to me. I went behind a small hill and sat down, after awhile I quietly crept back. Nobody said a word.*

*I was talking to Roy and mentioned the time when I got him into trouble. He told a joke and I overheard it, I repeated it to my younger brothers, bad words and all. Mom overheard, she bawled me out and I told her that I had heard it from Roy. He was told to be more careful where he told his stories. Most of my attempts at humor usually finished up the same way. Roy, Leah, Leonard and most of the others were comics, not me.*

*I remember finding a .25 Caliber pistol in the dresser in the living room, it was loaded and I put a shot into the wall in the living room. WHAT A SHOCK! Remember the little Shetland pony that we were caring for, it had a matching saddle, blanket and bridle. It*

*had one perverse characteristic, it would only go to a certain part of the field and no farther. I figured that if I got him running as fast as I could that he would forget where he was. I got him up to a full gallop and when he hit that place in the field he stopped dead, I flew out of the saddle and over his head. He never did pass that point in the field even though I tried my best.*

*I remember going fishing up the little stream (Crow Creek) that ran through the pasture just north of the house. I didn't fish, but I went along to help Mom, I think my main function was to remove the fish from the hook when Mom caught one. One time I pulled a tumble weed out of the creek and a large trout came flopping out. Mom was a rabid fisher woman and would fish whenever the opportunity presented itself. I never took up the sport, because I knew I would have to eat them if I caught them and at the time I disliked fish. I tried to help some of the baby ducks fly from the hayloft, not a pleasant memory.*

*Vivian and Frank lived just north of us and I remember visiting and the good times I had there. I could always talk to Vivian and she understood me better than I did. Once we were going to Sunday School, and it was close to the end of summer, she asked me if I was sorry that school would be starting, I said; "No, because then I would only be whipped on Saturdays and Sundays." She said that if I would learn to behave this would not happen. I never did learn.*

*We moved to the Black's place north of Cheyenne shortly after that and I have memories of cleaning out the chicken houses and white washing them. I found out that if the chickens were left out in a heavy rain storm they would drown. This happened once when I forgot to put them in before a rainstorm. Leah's story about the Billy Goat reminded me of the time Mom sent me to the yard to tie the goat to a metal pole near the barn. I took the rope and made the mistake of turning my back on him, he hit me in the rear and drove me into that pole, I could have killed him it hurt so bad. We had those huge wooden boxes that Dad converted into bedrooms for the boys, I really liked those boxes. I could be alone there and occasionally hide out so Mom would find someone else to do a chore before she found me. I used to walk over to the Country Club and caddy on occasion, I was not a great caddy because I had a tendency to talk too*



*much. I found three clubs over a period of time and used to shoot a fair game. We only played the remote holes, never when members were present. During the school year we were sometimes marooned in town by a snow storm. We would go to the Metropolitan Hotel and Grandmother would give us a room and feed us.*

*We moved back to the green house at 1717 Alexander when I went into the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, around 1936. Leah mentioned about Dad lecturing and emphasizing his various points with his index finger poked into the hollow just below the shoulder, I had many of those lectures. I got a paper route and some other odd jobs and began to earn some of my own money. Roy brought a bunch of musical instruments home and each one of us were given a choice, Anna and Vivian already played violin and piano, respectively, and Roy played Trumpet. June chose the trumpet, Betty picked the drums (I think), Leah picked the trombone (which I wanted, but she was older), I picked the mellophone, Leonard picked drums, Charles and Nancy finished up with the clarinets. We were the backbone of the Municipal Band and a few local musical aggregations in Cheyenne for a long time. Grandmother paid a portion of the cost of the French Horn I had when I was in the eighth grade, still play today. My most pleasant memories were when I was involved with music, that horn transported me to a whole new world.*

*Mother didn't fully trust June, Betty and Leah out by themselves, so she would make them take me with them when they went out. They would let me out down town and tell me not to go home until they picked me up, I never did even though it meant that I would have to kill a few hours waiting.*

*Nancy, Dolfe and Pat used to wait until I walked through the living room and made a face at them, then they'd yell at Mom that I was picking on them, remember girls?*

*We had some very good times and some very bad ones, but the good ones are the ones which stick out. Enough for now.*

Love,

Frank

(Editors note: Many thanks, Frank, for your wonderful memories. I do indeed remember tuning up and bawling every time you came close. We would wait in anticipation of you making faces at us or calling us

“chunky” and when it happened we could really turn on the tears. I remember one time when you offered me a jar and told me you would pay me a quarter if I could fill it up with tears. I was dumb enough to try. Did you know tears evaporate at the speed of light?

Another vivid memory is of the “milking expedition.” Each night when Frank was sent to milk the cows, Pat and I would beg to go along. Well, the routine was like this; we would get in the back of Frank's old Model T truck and yell at people, “get a horse” and other cute saying and laugh all the way. Upon arrival at the pasture, the boys would milk the cow and tell us about the bull in the next pasture. Then they would wave a red scarf or anything at the bull and pretty soon he would be pawing the ground. Then they left us in the pasture and drove over the hill and Pat and I would be left screaming and crying. When we got home, we promptly ratted on the boys and they got in trouble. We were told we couldn't go again. Next night, same thing, we'd beg, they'd tease, we'd cry, they'd get in trouble. I'm surprised mother didn't drown us. — Dolfe)

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

From Anna and Norman's daughter, Joanne Jacka —

*My memories are from the times we visited when I was around 7 or 8. We would drive down from Casper and just take over the house. There we were — 10 girls and Mike. Stair-stepping down from me, on down, Sue, Ilene, Jean, Sally, Nicki, Jerry, Kathi and Donna and Jayne. We would hide from the grown ups down in the coal cellar, much to the consternation of both Grandma and Anna. We would have glorious pillow fights in the “girls” room. I remember 4 or 6 of us per bed, head to toe. I don't know how we ever got any sleep. And that claw foot bathtub, which we had to climb up on a stepping stool and slide into. What I wouldn't give to have a tub like that now.*

*And, of course, that glorious ride with Grandpa out to the sugar beet farm of Aunt Vivian and Uncle Franks'. I thought it was in Colorado, but surely Grandpa wouldn't have taken all of us that far, would he? (Ed. Note: It was just over the border in Colorado on the Owl Canyon Road, 30 miles from Cheyenne.) He drove right down the middle of the road just as if he was driving a train, at speeds that were absolutely thrilling. It was*



*a good thing none of our parents were along. Once we got there, we climbed on all kinds of tractors and dangerous equipment; hung on a hand-made rope swing; chased dogs; drank lemonade and ate chocolate chip cookies and had a royally good time. It's amazing we didn't kill ourselves on that farm equipment, but we were kids and indestructible. One thing I'll never forget about that trip was the smell of the rotting sugar beets. Wow, some things stick with you forever, don't they.*

*Anyway, thanks again for the memories. It just occurred to me that the 1717 Alexandria is almost my address at 717 Oak Drive. Grandpa taught me how to ride a bike on that wonderful sloping lawn. And Uncle Mike stuffed me in a tire and rolled me down that hill....scary stuff of those early days. — Joanne*

(Another note from your editor: I well remember those visits from the "girls." Pat and I had a collection (about 30) of perfume bottles. Now, these were really classy ones, "Blue Moon" and "Evening in Paris" along with other classics costing up to 10 cents a bottle. One time those little darlings emptied all the bottles onto the bed. Can you imagine how the bed smelled for the next few months. That was awful stuff!!! Cured me from wearing perfume. --- Dolfe)

From Stuart Beardslee (used to be known as Bill):

Got your copy of the latest "Plain Brown Rapper." Thank you so very much. It is really fascinating to learn about Mom's (Vivian) early years. I can never remember her talking about her growing up. With us living in Michigan and only going to Cheyenne on scattered visits, our family never really got close until we moved to the farm. I don't remember much about the train trips from Lansing to Cheyenne, but I do remember one trip we made by bus during the war. We had made a pick-up stop, I don't remember where it was, but I remember that one of the new passengers got on and had some carry-on luggage which he placed over our head in the rack. The luggage was covered with snow and began to drip on us. When mother asked him to move it, he got ugly with her and refused. About that time a young Marine on the bus came forward and threw the luggage on the floor and dared the man to say something. The Marine stayed with us and took personal charge of Bob and I until we reached Cheyenne. I will always remember that incident. We

were living on Mildred Street in Lansing at the time as I recall.

Reading of Roy's fascination with flying reminded me of all the bicycle trips Bob and I and some of our friends used to take to the small airport in Lansing. We would ride over there and eat ice cream and watch the small airplanes take off and land. It was almost a tradition with us. I can also remember the times that Dad used to drive a city bus because of the union strike and mom would take us ice skating while we waited for dad to finish his shift.

Reading Aunt Leah's accounts of Holliday Park brought back memories of the times we also made the trip down the street in a tire when ever we would visit from the farm. I remember the times we would ride the ice sail sled. We would ride it and pull it back and go again. It was really a blast. I can remember going into the basement of Grandma Brown's house and sorting through all the ice skates to find a pair that would fit. We never had our own because there was never a place to skate on the farm.

Charles' Range Ride story made me think of the trip Bob and I took on horse back when we were leaving the farm. We rode our horses to Cheyenne to Aunt Leah and Uncle Willis's home so they could be sold. That was an adventure to us.

Love the paper and thank you for doing it.

Stuart

Pat has asked me to share with you news about a product that has recently been put on the market.

Pat writes: Those of you who use sweeteners for your food additives, keep watch for "SPLENDA." This is a natural sweetener made from sugar processed by McNeil Specialties, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson Co. They take natural sugar and break it down into its five sugar components and extract Sucrolose. Then take the Sucrolose and process it into a sugar substitute. My eldest son, James, is the head Chemical Engineer in the initial phase of extracting the Sucrose from sugar. He lives in Athens, GA with his wife Debbie, stepson Joshua and daughter Gena who visits frequently from Marietta. The advantages to "SPLENDA" is that it is a natural product, not an artificial sweetener. It has a longer shelf life and does not break down in cooking. "Makes a tasty apple cobbler!!" It is used in all European Countries,



(Godivia Chocolates) Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Asia, etc. and recently approved by the FDA, here in the United States. The Diabetes Associations are excited about its approval as it has been endorsed world-wide by them to replace the others. It is being test marketed right now in Tucson in R C Cola. Have a wonderful day. — Pat

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Please send your comments and memories, they are an important part of understanding our past and making sure our children have a written history.

I am preparing the November and December issues a little at a time and would love to have any of your Thanksgiving and Christmas stories to use. These two holidays were major productions in our home, mother and dad loved them and I hope you will share your memories with me. Thanksgiving ones for the November issue and Christmas ones for the December issue.

Congratulations are in order for Terri Lee Ames and James Blake Smith (June's oldest son). They were wed on August 16, 1998 at the Old St Hilary's Church in Tiburon, California. By all accounts it was a truly beautiful affair!!  
 Congratulations and Best Wishes for a long and happy marriage!!!

#### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

Nancy Treadway, September 9  
 Bob Treadway, September 21

That's all for now, School is starting and the Snow Birds will begin their trip South to warm weather. Bob and I are planning a short trip in November. Fall is a beautiful time of year to travel, the colors are usually brilliant and the roads are not to crowded.

Exciting news. The book, "Dear Father" is at the printer. It should be off the press on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998. For any of you that aren't familiar with my efforts, here is a brief synopsis.

The book is a compilation of 43 letters written during the Civil War, from 1861 to 1864. The majority of them were written by two of Tandy's great uncles, William Milton Nash and Thomas Washington Nash to their father, Robert B. Nash. There are other letters, some written by friends of Robert Nash and a few between Robert and his wife Frances. There are 2 letters written by our Great Grandfather, Tandy William Nash. *BROWN*

Bob and I have spent the last three years researching the events mentioned in the various letters and the finished product is now being published.

If it were possible, I would send each of you a copy of the book, free of charge, but since I don't have that kind of money I will make you an offer I hope you will find worth considering. If you order your book and send your money prior to October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998, you can have it for the publishers price of \$7.50. (Luckily the printer is a good friend of ours and is giving us a terrific break on the publishing.) After the 5<sup>th</sup>, the price will be \$10. Also, for anyone not a family member, the price is \$10.

Just let me know and I will have them all in the mail no later than October 10<sup>th</sup>.

This is exciting to come to the conclusion but I'm not really sure I want it to end. The research has been a lot of fun and very rewarding.

Love,

Dolfe