

PLAIN BROWN RAPPER

News for the Tandy and Grace Brown Family

May, 1999



A Tribute to a Great Lady
Our Mother
Grace Cleo Parker Brown

Mother to: 17 children - Grandmother to: 52 children

Great Grandmother to: 101 children

Born: December 21, 1893 at Marble, Arkansas

Went to her great reward: April 22, 1960, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Selected, "Wyoming's Mother of the Year" in 1954

Selected, second runner-up "America's Mother of the Year" in 1954

This issue of the Plain Brown Rapper is dedicated to all mothers in the Brown Family and especially to our mother, Grace Cleo Parker Brown who was undoubtedly the most important force in our lives. Thanks to our brother Charles for his design and contribution of the front page and to his Web Page Designer, Imad Karaki, for his copies of the pictures.

Mother was, as we all know; a strong willed, intelligent, capable woman who did all she could to make each one of us feel totally loved, supported, and as good if not better than anyone.

During the last months of mother's life, she became bedridden and wouldn't go to a hospital. Her biggest fear during those few months was that someone would hook her up to a machine and keep her alive for a long time, so we cared for her at home. During the time Mother was ill, we each had a job to do. Leah was there in the evening and prepared her for the night. She would put away her letter writing material, what book she might be reading at the time and laid out her bible. My time was the morning hours, I gave her a bath, changed her bed and nightgown and laid out her day items, (the writing material, book and etc.) Pat and Nancy both worked so they came when they could and filled in the gaps. She was an easy patient, always alert, very grateful and pleasant.

Dad kept her on her toes by making various statements he knew would rile her. He would stand outside her bedroom door and say he was going to take something apart, move something or do anything he knew she wouldn't approve of and she always rose to the occasion. It was difficult to keep a straight face as the interchange took place.

Mike was in Japan with the Marine's during this time and an eerie event took place. He had sent mother a music box for Mother's Day and it arrived about the same time she passed away on April 20, 1960. We were all so sad to think she hadn't seen the beautiful box. But anyone belonging to this family isn't really sure she didn't see the music box.

Her days were filled with visitors, phone calls, and flowers. The house was full. Dad kept the house clean, made coffee and served the endless stream of people wanting to visit Mother. There aren't many people who could claim so many friends and admirers as our mother. She had taken in many young people in trouble or whose parents were having trouble and loved and nurtured them.

She could always be counted on for a meal or a word of encouragement. Sundays brought an assortment of people hoping to be invited to sit at her table. The most wonderful fried chicken and

mounds of mashed potatoes and gravy. The thought of it makes your mouth water. Always homemade rolls with butter and homemade jams or jelly. There were, of course, salads and vegetables, but they paled by comparison to the main part of the meal. Then the desserts of freshly baked pie or cake.... or pie and cake.... or mounds of cookies and even homemade ice cream. Often times there were soldiers from the Fort to join us and friends of various family members. My friends loved being included and enjoying the joking and eating. Sunday dinner — a truly wonderful event.

However, taking care of mother while she was ill was a learning experience. While I bathed her, mother told me endless things she thought I should know and of course, I wasn't smart enough to write them down or record them. If I had, the search for family clues would be lots easier. So what I'm telling you now is from memory and as I have grown older, completed research on life and customs of the early 1900's I have become more understanding of the many things Mother told. Please remember, she was born before the turn of the century, life and attitudes in those days were entirely different than they are now. The things told here are not to pass judgement or create pity, they are merely the way her life was and the events, I feel, led her to be the strong willed woman she became.

Mother's Mother, Mary Elizabeth, "Mollie" Davis was the oldest child in a family of seven. We always knew her as Grandma Eidam. She was born to James B. Davis and Caldonia S. Hall. As far as I can resource, James Davis was a Teacher and a Doctor. Caldonia was a homemaker and 2nd generation Cherokee Indian. We have often laughed at the escapades of Mollie, a young spirited woman who did all the things her family disapproved of, but her life style was not funny to our mother. While she loved her mother, she also felt deeply ashamed of Mollie and the way she lived.

Mother was born out of wedlock and labeled (as were children in similar situations in those days) a bastard or illegitimate. The memory of her telling me are vivid in my mind. It was as if she was releasing all those years of shame. It certainly didn't make any difference to me, I loved her so much I wouldn't have cared how she was born, but her hurt and pain, still there, after all those years, how sad. She kept many thing bottled up inside her heart and the fact of her birth had left a deep scar.

Grace was born on December 21, 1893 in a tiny town called Eureka Springs, Arkansas. (Or,

Marble, Arkansas.) She was premature and so tiny they could fit her little head into a tea cup. She said they put her in a shoe box and placed her on the open door of the oven. (It was a wood stove and placing newborns there to keep them warm on winter nights was quite common, now we have more modern methods.) She was told Mollie didn't want this tiny baby and refused to nurse her. A wet nurse was called in to feed Mother, another common practice. Little Gracie was a fighter and defied all odds to live.

Later, Mollie married Will N. Parker. He was a railroad surveyor and took Mollie and Gracie with him into Oklahoma to do his job. They lived in a covered wagon and even though Mother was very little at that time, she really liked living in a covered wagon and remembered this as a good time in her life. Perhaps explaining why she loved to camp, spend time in the mountains and fish. She really enjoyed fishing. She used to tell us stories of being followed by the Indians because Will wouldn't get their permission before he began his survey work. She told of lying on her stomach on the edge of a hill and watching the Indians down below around their campfire. The Chief's name was Crazy Snake and he was very real to us in her telling. She told of racing back into Arkansas before the Indians could catch them. Mother loved the excitement, Mollie did not.



This is the picture of Little Edna. She was a cute little girl, easy to see why Mollie loved her so.

At some point, another child was born. A

beautiful little blue eyed blond girl named Edna. One day while helping Mother clean out Grandpa Eidam's barn, we ran across two pictures. They were of two little girls, this was the first I knew mother had a little sister. Her name was Edna and mother told me she died when she was about three years old. Evidently on one of the surveying trips, Edna contracted pneumonia. The mortality rate for pneumonia was very high in the early 1900's. Mother said that Mollie loved that little girl more than anything in the world and after Edna died Mollie would tell Mother she wished it was she who had died instead of Edna. Another bitter pill to swallow.



This is the other picture, the one of mother. She was such a pretty little girl. The stain on her eye is a water mark on the picture. Wish I could get it out.

Shortly after Edna's death, Mollie divorced (or at least left) Will Parker, she left Gracie with her mother, Caldonia, and went to Colorado along with her sister Lena. Mother must have been about 6 or 7 years old at this time. She was sent from relative to relative to care for newborns and help with cleaning. Her memories from this period of her life were painful and sad. She washed diapers in the cold water of the creek, had no real place to call home and was always reminded of her place in life. During this time she was sick a lot, plagued with

bad ears and allergies. In later life, they tried to correct the ear problems, but they were always there. Evidently an allergy to feathers caused the majority of her problems. (And, wouldn't you know, every pillow and mattress were made with feathers.) The feather allergy has affected several of the Brown's. It is hard for me to imagine her pain, but it certainly explains her philosophy of life.

Meantime, Mollie and Lena were living it up in Colorado and Texas and places in between. While mother and I were cleaning out Eidam's barn, we found boxes and boxes of empty whiskey bottles and Revenue Stamps. Mother asked me if I knew what they were and of course I didn't. She said that Mollie and Lena ran bootleg whiskey from Texas to Colorado. They would fill the bottles with the whiskey, cork it (even the corks were there) and slap on a Revenue Stamp to make it legal. At some point the law caught up with them and they were run out of Texas.

Later, when mother was about 12, Mollie sent for her to come live with her in Colorado. This must have been a thrill for mother, to escape the life she had been living, always reminded that someone was having to furnish her with food and clothing and cleaning and caring for her aunts and uncles. So, she came West to live with Mollie and began a new life.

Her new life was much better than the old one. Her dream of going to school someday was squelched, but living in rural Ault, Colorado was good. She lived at this time on the Decker's Farm and told me about getting into trouble for running a horse from Ault to Nunn one time. She thought she was done for. It must have been quite traumatic for her because every time we drove down highway 85 towards Greeley, she related the story.



The Decker Farm at Ault, Colorado

Mother fulfilled her dreams of getting to go to school through her children. From the time you were old enough to talk, you were told about going to college. I'm sure all of you know what life would have been like if you hadn't completed high school and the majority went on to college and most gained degrees in chosen fields. She read every book she could get her hands on and Dr. George Johnston, our family doctor taught her everything she could absorb about medicine.



Mother and Grandma Eidam, Easter Sunday, 1912. If you look in the back ground of the picture you will see the Castle up at the top of the hill on 19th. This picture was taken along 19th Street, about 19th and Bradley Avenue.

At some point, Mollie and Gracie Parker came to Cheyenne. Mollie had been married numerous times, there was Will Parker, somebody named Carpenter and Eidam that we knew about, but mother said it was at least five times and she wasn't sure she ever bothered to get a divorce. But when they came to Cheyenne, Mollie was using the name Parker. The first reference I found for the two of them was in the 1911-1912 City Directory. They are listed at Grace Parker, 519 W 19th Street, occupation: waiter, Kozaberio Asai (restaurant), 317 W. 17th Street. Mollie Parker is listed as living (boards) at 519 W 19th St and her occupation was not listed. We do know that she was a street car conductor in 1912. In the 1913-14 directory, they are both still listed at that address

however, by November, 1912, Mother married Dad so this was old information. It does mean she and Mollie came to Cheyenne probably in 1909 or 1910 in order to be listed in the 1911-1912 Directory.

Grace married the tall handsome soldier, Tandy Parks Brown on November 16, 1912 and they lived for a brief time on Fort D. A. Russell. Then, when there were too many children to remain in the military, they moved into town and Dad worked for Kelly Mercantile. In 1914 he went to work for the Union Pacific Railroad and retired in 1969 after 46 years of service.

We all have our particular memories of Mother. She was kind and gentle. Charles remembers: "When I had bad ear aches, mom would put my head in her lap and put warm water with some kind of medicine in my ear. She did this for a long time during the evenings when she could have been relaxing."

She loved having her long black hair brushed. If you wanted her undivided attention for any period of time, you volunteered to brush that beautiful hair. She kept it clean and brushed. She usually wore it in a bun, but at night she let the bun out and braided her hair letting it hang down to the center of her back. Her crowning glory. I can remember she rinsed it in vinegar to keep the color. Don't know if it worked, but she sure had pretty, coal black, hair.

Charles also remembers: "the willow bush in the front yard where we had to bring a branch for our "whippin" when we misbehaved. I don't think the girls had to do this. It sure didn't hurt us, but built great character." (Yes, the girls had to do it too. I used to have to make several trips because I couldn't get it right the first time. However, by the time I got done messing around, she had mostly forgotten what I had done to deserve the "whippin" and I got away with a lot of stuff - Dolfe)

Joanne Jacka writes about a time when mother crocheted her doll a blue dress. She said mother sat beside her and they measured and worked until the dress fit exactly. She said, "Grandma looked you right in the eye when she talked and you felt very special."

Can you remember Converse School and Miss Fincher? Charles remembers walking home for lunch and having tomato soup and a sandwich. I had nearly forgotten — I still love tomato soup and toasted cheese sandwiches. Remember when they built Alta Vista School? It was a 2 ½ block walk but we still went to Converse, a 7 block walk, because mother liked Miss Fincher.

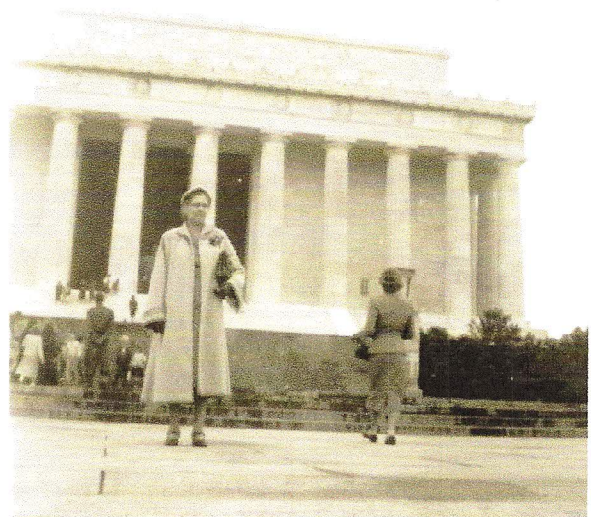
Mother received many honors during her life. Most of them through her children. In 1954, Leah

began the process of having her honored "Wyoming's Mother of the Year." Mother and Dad went to New York for the national conference and Mother was selected as "Second Runner-up" for the title of "National Mother of the Year."

The train trip to New York was a riot. Everyone knows what a clown our father was and he made that a lively affair. They were booked in a sleeper car for the journey. While they were getting ready to retire for the night, Dad came upon a woman bending over her berth ready to get in. Her fanny was too great a temptation and he pinched her. She jumped into her berth and screamed for help. About that time, mother came into the car from the other end and poor Dad, he never heard the end of it. He swore he thought it was mother, but she never believed him.

Then, when he got to New York and they went to dinner, he apparently was one of a relatively few males there and he kept referring to himself as a "Rose among all those Thorns," and once more he was in trouble. But the best one was when he was in their room at the Waldorf Astoria and a maid came to the door to see if he wanted "night service." He was quite flustered, not knowing she only wanted to turn down his bed and he slammed the door. Mother seemed to think that made up for everything.

She appeared on Art Linkletter's Radio Show called the "Breakfast Club" in New York. We all huddled around the radio in great anticipation. He wanted to make a big deal out of the 17 children and she wanted to stress the quality of their lives.



Mother in Washington, D. C. in front of the Lincoln Memorial. She and Dad had been to Philadelphia to visit Charles while he was stationed there. He thinks this was in about 1956.

When mother died, she wanted certain things included into her Funeral Service. I have an envelope on which she wrote the "Proverbs" she wanted at her Funeral.

"Proverbs - Chapter 11 - verse 22. As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

"Proverbs - Chapter 12. Verse 4. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is a rottenness in his bones."

"Proverbs - Chapter 13 - verse 24. He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

We are all very much aware of her love of the Book of Proverbs. I had to laugh at Roy, he said, "Did you ever think about church? We went every Sunday without fail, but she didn't. Do you suppose she was just looking for a little quiet time?" Could be, if there were that many little people under my feet, I'd want to send them somewhere and get them out of my hair.



This is a pretty picture of Mom, she must have been about 18 at the time.

There isn't room for any more stuff in this edition. I'll have to save some for another time. Please feel free to write, e-mail or call in you memories. It was lots of fun hearing from members of the family. Next month, we'll do Dad so if you have anything you want to add — please do!!!



This is another fun picture of Mom. Again, at about 18. We rarely saw her in a picture with a smile. I really love this one.

I'm sure all of you have memories of a different nature. The older members of the family remember a hard life and stern upbringing. I came along at a time when life was easier and we had a lot of fun. I am truly grateful to her for teaching Bob how to travel. She taught him to stop and smell the roses and not be in such a darn big hurry to fly across the country. Now when we travel, it is partially in her honor that we stop at every interesting point. We find ourselves saying, wish Mom was with us, she would have loved this or that.....actually, I'm not to sure she isn't there, we've had some pretty exciting times, just by accident.

Wishing each and everyone of you the very best Mother's Day.

Don't forget, to keep up on our brother Charles, use this Web Page.

WWW.CHUCKBROWN.ORG

E-mail addresses:

WELCOME TO NEW E-MAIL USERS:

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Jimmy	mstngfan@hotmail.com

As always, please check you address and be sure it is correct. Thanks!!!

Send your memories, questions and etc. I love hearing from you and will add them to the PBR.
Dolfe.

BIRTHDAYS

<i>Pat White</i>	<i>May 31</i>
<i>Dolfe VanAlyne</i>	<i>June 28</i>
<i>June Smith</i>	<i>June 29</i>

ANNIVERSARIES

*Dick and Marty June 11
forty fourth Anniversary
Congratulations!!!*

P.S. Did you ever wonder how the Hebert Boys always new when mother baked? There they were, eating and eating and eating.

REMEMBER THESE FAMILY MEMBERS IN YOUR HEARTS AND PRAYERS

Vivian remains in the nursing facility. They hope to bring her home soon, however we don't have a date. You can write to her at her home address (Vivian Beardslee, 9007 Chisholm Ln, Austin, TX 78748) and Bob will take the cards to her, wherever she is.

Anna remains in the Assisted Care Facility and you can reach her with cards by sending them to Kathy Yenney, 54043 Matthews Lane, Milton-Freewater, OR 97862.

And, always keep Bill Brown close to your heart. He is a brave young man.

Please let me know if any other family members need our special thoughts.

In Loving Memory of Anna Mary Brown French



July 19, 1914 - May 24, 1999

Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Sister

This is a tribute to our sister, Anna French. Married Norman Hughes French on March 3, 1940. Mother of Joanne Jacka, Nicki Schumacher, Kathi Yenney. Grandmother of nine and Great Grandmother of eight. Anna was an R.N. receiving her training at St. Mary Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, Colorado. Anna and Norman and their three lovely daughters traveled extensively in Jordan, Korea, Nigeria, and Pakistan as Norman worked for the State Department. Anna volunteered with the Red Cross in many of the nations. Anna was well know as a marvelous cook and could entertain large groups with a great deal of ease. To dine at her table was a real pleasure. She loved her children, worshiped her grandchildren and was sure her great grandchildren were the only ones on earth. She also loved Opera, Politics and a good book. We will miss Anna, she was one in a million. God Rest Her Soul.