

# Plain Brown Rapper

News for the Tandy and Grace Brown Family

December, 2009

Lately it seems the news has all been heartbreaking and with the advent of a whole new season, it feels good to send along some fun news.

Recently our brother Mike loaned me some pictures (which I have since returned) to scan into my computer for future use in the book and etc. There were some great ones of Mike when he was just a little boy which I will always cherish and then there were some of historic value.

The picture below will let you know where we got all our good looks. This picture taken in about 1922 is of Grandma Eidam (Mary Elizabeth Davis - Parker - Carpenter - Eidam -- she was usually called Molly) and part of her family. She married Charlie Eidam and they went to Arkansas shortly after the wedding. Honeymoon?



The two women on the left side of the picture are our aunts (Grandma Eidam's sisters) but I have no idea which ones. The person in the middle is Grandma Eidam, next is her mother Caroline Caldonia Hall-Davis and the dude on the right is Grandpa Eidam.

Much has been made through the years about Grandma Eidam's husbands. When she was 17 years of age, (very young by our standards) she became pregnant and was not



married. Her father James B. Davis was a bit of a tyrant and I'm sure her life was not pleasant for a long period of time. Shortly after our mother was born she married Willson N. Parker. They remained married for a period of time and had a little girl whom they named Edna. He was a surveyor for the railroad and they traveled by covered wagon in the Oklahoma Indian Territory. Mother told terrific stories of being chased by Chief Crazy Snake and his braves.

Little Edna died when she was about 3 years old and soon after Grandma Eidam left Will Parker and went West, leaving mother with her family to raise.

Grandma Eidam's grandfather was James Turner Davis, a "Herb Doctor" who brought his family to Eureka Springs, Arkansas to live and be safe from the Civil War. He then traveled on to Springfield, Missouri to treat the wounded soldiers. Mother said Grandma Eidam knew the "Younger Brothers" of Outlaw Fame. She very well could have because when she was just a little girl, the notorious outlaws would come to Eureka Springs and heal their wounds in the hot springs. No one would turn them in (mostly because they were very generous with their ill gotten gains) and they remained safe from the law. Her other grandfather was Thomas Hall and he owned a saloon where the outlaws could hid.

In the early 1900's Molly sent for Gracie and they lived for a time in Colorado. They came to Cheyenne in 1911. They worked as waitresses until mother met and married Tandy (November 12, 1912). Mother became a housewife and Grandma went on to do other things.

An interesting note is Grandma Eidam's employment as the first female street car conductor during World War I in Cheyenne, Wyoming..

In 1917 she married Fred Carpenter who was a Sgt at Fort Russell and they became partners running the old Wyoming Hotel. The Wyoming Hotel was located on 16<sup>th</sup> Street between Capital and Carey Avenues here in Cheyenne. It burned down in 2004 and remains an ugly eye sore for the City of Cheyenne. Just a hole in the ground.

Later she divorced Fred (the records show they divorced in 1923 and I am told she married Charlie in 1922 – so.....) married Charlie and together they were proprietors of the Metropolitan Hotel which was located on 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Carey Avenue. The hotel was right by the railroad and was used mainly by railroad workers. Across the street from the hotel was the "Dixie Rooms" and it was where the "working girls" lived. They lived there and worked at the Metropolitan Hotel. In other words, Grandma was the Madam.

Remember, please, the time when all this took place and what opportunities there were for women. Women could be waitresses, teachers, secretaries, seamstresses or other menial laborers. Grandma Eidam was interested in money. As a woman she could not operate a hotel on her own so she married someone who could help her pursue her goals. Not always a success story but her choice.

Our mother was ashamed of her mother's career choice but an extremely dutiful daughter. When Grandmother Eidam was old and ill, it was mother who took care of her daily.



Personally, in my eyes, Molly remains one of the more interesting stories in our family. Even though her career choice was a forbidden topic it was better than an having an outlaw relative!

Now for a really fun topic. Grace Brown was a unique individual. She was all things to us as we grew up because in those days, fathers brought home the money and mothers took care of the house, children and all the rest.

For any of us who were "naughty" and got caught, she had no qualms about applying corporal punishment. Usually you were sent to get your own switch and if you didn't do it right – well, you did it again and etc. Because of the size of the family she really had no choice because if she didn't we probably would have been a bunch of hoodlums.

She was a fantastic cook and we never went hungry. Famous for her pies, we enjoyed foods many others didn't. Somehow, she kept our home clean as a whistle. It was not unusual to have guests (invited or not) for dinner and there was always enough and thoroughly enjoyed. One of her regulars was Reverend Caldwell, Preacher at the Presbyterian Church. He loved Sunday dinner at our house and was there at every opportunity.

Also present on Sundays and Holidays were soldiers from Fort Warren. Some were repeaters, some only once, but always very grateful for the home cooked meal. For many years mother and dad's Christmas Cards included some from men who had been to our home for dinner. She was a treasure.

In 1954, Grace was nominated to be "Wyoming's Mother of the Year" and won the title overwhelmingly. No surprise to us, but she was such a humble lady. Along with the title were many receptions, teas, speaking requests and a trip to New York City.



This picture was taken at the reception given for mother by the Governor of Wyoming.

The Governor in May of 1954 was C. J. Doc Rogers. He was a really nice man who was blessed with a charming wife. They were really great to Mom and Dad through the entire event.





Among the pictures Mike let me copy is a picture of the "Mother's" on top of the Rockefeller Center in New York City. Mother is on the left (I inserted a little red arrow) and she has her wonderful smile on her face.

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