



# Tales From Old Soddy: My Depression-Era Childhood

*Wilma Gundy*

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Recorded history is in books and museums, written not only on paper but also on rocks, papyrus, skins and engraved in caves. The palpable heart of history is in the lives of those who experienced it. "Tales from Old Soddy" features stories of my family's life during the Depression era, the visceral images of history, the living anecdotes. Let me introduce my family: Dad, Lewis L. Davis, served as a midshipman in the U. S. Navy during World War I. Due to lack of national funds, he was discharged in 1921. Looking for work as an itinerant farm laborer, he was hired by Grandpa Kidder, whose sixteen-year-old daughter Fern was immediately enraptured by this handsome sailor they called Jack. When she turned eighteen, they married on January 2, 1923. My siblings and I are of the era Tom Brokaw called the "Greatest Generation." My oldest sister Betty was born in 1924, my oldest brother Ted in 1926, myself two years later. My other siblings Lewis, Laura, Ernest, Joyce, Eileen and Sarah were born approximately two years apart. Thus, my sister Sarah, born in December 1943, was nineteen years younger than my oldest sister. Memory is the prism through which we view our lives, translating what seemed mundane at the time into an experience with color and depth. "Tales From Old Soddy" is not just my memoir; it is also the memories of my siblings, how we lived, the games we played, the fun we had, the food we ate, the chores we shared, the dust and snow blizzards we endured. It is the story of how Mom and Dad, despite limited educational and economic resources, instilled in each of us the backbone and values to live productive and enjoyable lives.

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