

GOING HOME AGAIN

It is impossible to completely describe how important this website has become to my father and I. But I would be remiss if I did not try. I would also be remiss in taking any credit for its existence for it was the brainchild of my father, Thomas H. (Pap) Ewing.

I am writing this on the 31st of January, 2003. 50 years ago today my Mother and Father were married and began the journey of building my immediate family. Through a life in the military Mom and Dad somehow stayed in touch with brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. I don't recall many times before age eight coming back "*home*", but I do remember some things. I remember Linda and Eddy's wedding, (the organist there inspired me to become a musician myself). I remember a reunion in the summer back when Granny and Grandpa lived on 124 north of Snellville, and the cousins throwing pine cones at each other and picking apples from the trees behind the house (there is now an oil-change place there near the intersection of Reagan Pkwy., but the apple trees are still there). While we still lived in Nebraska and Illinois, I remember visiting relatives here in Georgia when I was seven or eight and how that was special to me... because Mom and Dad always said we were "*going home*" like it was such a magical place.

This changed a great deal when we moved to Warner Robins (in 1969 I think). Then it seemed every other week we were "*going home*" to visit with Granny and Grandpa or Aunts and Uncles. My memories of the family summer picnics during that time are lodged permanently in my mind. There was this really fun place near Conyers on a private lake. It had a trampoline (I still have pictures of Dad trying it out for everyone's entertainment), a beach, a boat dock, paddleboats, and everything my cousins and I could ever want. I remember Christmas with the Ewing Family when we used to rotate the gathering from one family's house to another each year. It never mattered whose home we were in, it always felt like our own. I remember Grandpa passing away, and the funeral, seeing all the family at little Friendship Primitive Baptist. But even during such a sad occasion we were family and we still savored the time together. I remember moving the summer picnic to the park in Conyers, the softball games, and the now aging cousins still trying to make a go at a basketball game. Every year we could count on almost everyone being there. Those are some of my best memories of our family.

Somewhere along the line, the world got more complicated, cousins grew up and had families of their own, and moved all around. Somehow we all kind of lost touch. And with the exception of the traditional Christmas and summer get-togethers, it seemed that things had changed, and the expectation that the whole family would see each other much grew dim. And now an eternity has past and I begin to wonder if we could ever see a glimpse of those days again.

Most of you know that over the years Dad has had a love affair with family history. Jokes have abounded about Dad traipsing through cemeteries the world over to find our dearly departed ancestors. Yet, most of the fruits of his labors may be found right here. The genealogical section of this website will attest that the Ewing family has spanned this country and back again to get us where we are today. We have not only been a part of this nation's history, we have played a great part in making it. As I grew up, I gained a love for the family and its rich heritage, and American History in general. As much traveling as I've done in my life, it would be hard for me to not appreciate our nation's history. That was one of the biggest benefits to growing up in a military family.

Dad retired a few years ago, and one would think that after the forty some-odd years of service he gave to our nation, he would kick back and relax. But that's not my Dad. Instead he volunteered at the Gwinnett Historical Society and the Snellville Historical Society, ensuring that no matter how far apart we may grow, we will always have a way to look back and remember. His is a life-long testimony to service: to our family and to the nation. And such a testimony is what convinced me that I had to follow his lead in at least some small way.

So November of 2002 when Dad mentioned the idea of having a family website, the gears began turning and he never had to mention it again. Somehow, I knew this was important, and I knew what needed to be on the site. I knew that if somehow I might be able to capture some of the years gone by through the use of

technology, then maybe, just maybe, some of the barriers that have so distanced us from one another just might begin to fall.

And so, in this website you've seen some of the results of this idea. And I've received some wonderful comments and feedback. But understand this website was not intended to be just a cute weekend hobby to pass the time away. This site was intended to roll the clock back, and to bring us a little closer again. And as I continue to grow the site and maintain it, and as Dad and I continue to add volumes of information to it, I wish to transfer ownership of it to you. You've probably heard of computers that need more memory. This is a website that needs more memories.

As such, I wish to add my own special little invitation to participate in this web site. I want to invite you to remember the picnics and gatherings from the past. As I've shared with you some of the memories I've had from over the years, send along some of yours, pictures, stories, and so on, and I'll integrate them into the site somehow. I think Mom and Dad have proven to me the folly of the old saying that you can't "*go home*" again. And as Mom and Dad have recently celebrated the times they have shared for the past 50 years, let us share together in the times we've shared for generations so our children will continue to know the priceless value of "*home*".

Stewart Ewing