

The Story Tellers¹

By: Tom Dunn (admin) Last Updated:2006.04.05

Originally written by Della M. Cummings Wright. Re-written by her Grand Daughter, Della JoAnn McGinnis Johnson. Edited and Reworded By Tom Dunn

We are the chosen. My feelings are in each family there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. To me, doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts but, instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the story tellers of the tribe. All tribes have one. We have been called, as it were, by our genes.

Those who have gone before cry out to us: Tell our story. So, we do.

In finding them, we somehow find ourselves. How many graves have I stood before now and cried? I have lost count. How many times have I told the ancestors you have a wonderful family you would be proud of us?

How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow there was love there for me? I cannot say.

It goes beyond just documenting facts. It goes to who am I and why do I do the things I do. It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying I can't let this happen. The bones here are bones of my bone and flesh of my flesh. It goes to doing something about it. It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish. How they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their hardships and losses, their never giving in or giving up, their resoluteness to go on and build a life for their family.

It goes to deep pride that they fought to make and keep us a Nation. It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us. That we might be born who we are. That we might remember them. So we do. With love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence, because we are them and they are us. So, as a scribe called, I tell the story of my family.

It is up to that one called in the next generation to answer the call and take their place in the long line of family storytellers.

That, is why I do my family genealogy, and that is what calls those young and old to step up and put flesh on the bones.

¹ Comal County Genealogy Society:
<http://www.ccgstexas.org/module-PageSetter-viewpub-tid-3-pid-1.html> [URL accessed Sep 2009].