



John Frazier Eidson (senior)  
1912—1988

**T**he pictures above are of my dad when he was a young man. Later in his life, the loving relationship he once had with my mother came to an end when he turned into a rock-bottom alcoholic around the time he retired from the Air Force in the late 1970s. My father suffered from low self-esteem. Once when he was drunk he said to me, *Son, your mother married a foul ball*, a heartbreaking sign of the way he viewed himself. When he was growing up, I believe his spirit was irreparably broken on two fronts by his father. First, “Pop” Eidson blamed him for the death of his younger brother, Charles. (One day when he wouldn’t let Charles go with him and his friends to the store, Charles followed them anyway, and was run over and killed by a car.) Second, he wasn’t a good student, and when he failed out of the University of Georgia, Pop told him he was a loser who’d never amount to anything, probably not the first time such a thing was said. Until alcoholism ruined the latter part of his life, Frazier Eidson was loved by everyone who knew him. By the time the bottle ruled his existence, I saw him only a week or so each year. My brother and sister have had a hard time forgiving him for his failings, and I do not question their decision. What I choose to remember about him is what a kind and loving father he was during my formative years. Despite suffering the humiliation of being unable to adequately provide for his family after he got out of the Army at the end of World War II, he was a great father. Until he rejoined the military in 1952, our family was dirt poor. As a young child, I never remember having meat at home. The only meal that stands out in my mind was canned beans, canned turnip greens, and canned tomatoes over white rice. But in spite of my materially-poor beginnings, I have nothing but happy memories of my childhood. My parents loved each other, and were actively involved in their children’s lives. When all is said and done, those traits are two of the most important ingredients of a fulfilling childhood.



### **My Childhood Home**

Located in what was then a rural area outside Atlanta now known as Dunwoody, the tiny home my family and I lived in during my early years was built by my father and grandfather. The bare bones interior of the house consisted of a few hundred square feet, at most. The picture at right shows me helping my grandfather cut firewood in the backyard as my brother watches.

