

Afterword

But what of their “afterlife”?

Everyone lived happily ever after?

When my mother, Florence Rubert Graves, first took my two brothers and me north to Philadelphia in 1950, we lived with her mother, her sister, and her grandmother for about six months. It was our first in depth and simultaneous encounter with three generations of the female psyche. All three women were fascinating, enlightening – and damaged – in their own ways. Counting our mother, and her continuous influence, these four women had life-long impacts on each one of us.

The South Carolina trial was long and stressful. The end results were not what either side hoped for or expected. In the aftermath we boys, our mother and father, did not live happily ever after. All of us experienced many twists and turns in our lives afterwards. Not all of those later events were for the good. However, Mother lived to be 94 years old and experienced many incarnations of what it meant to be a woman in the 20th and 21st centuries. The Bluffton experience certainly taught Jerry, Steve, and me who we were and where we had come from.

Even though my brothers and I may never fully come to terms with what happened to us in 1951, we have lived into our late seventies and survived some of our own domestic disasters. Nevertheless, I have a great son and daughter, four grandchildren, and have been blessed with a twenty-five year marriage to a truly remarkable woman who is a constant inspiration. My brothers have their own tales to tell, some of triumph and some of defeat. But those and other stories must be saved for another day, for other books, perhaps for another author.

John Samuel Graves III
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