

# Appendix

*...if you don't know your family, you can't find yourself,  
because you do not know who you are.*

Betty Bright, Identity Sought: Heritage Found

## *Grandma Graves' Letter #1 to Florence Graves*

June, 1950

My Dear Florence,

Have been wanting to write you before, but it seems I just can't – writing seems hard now, as my hands shake so, but am going to continue anyway so please pardon pencil.<sup>1</sup> Received your letter, also the children's, which were both very much enjoyed. Tell them Grandpa laughed and seemed to get a kick out of them. I'm going to send them a letter in just a day or two. Am glad you are all enjoying yourselves, but you can't tell how we miss every one of you. Tell Stevie Grandma misses his coming over every morning – and John and Gerald too. Every time Johnny and Billy Cantrell holler playing I think it is them. Florence, no matter how you all are missed enjoy yourself and have a nice pleasurable time full of happiness.

The weather is so hot. It is impossible to do anything that doesn't have to be done – and I know you must be having it too. Bluffton keeps on running just the same old way only not so lively – for this weather has got us.<sup>2</sup>

Am sorry I didn't get your package to you before but it just skipped my mind, so don't think hard. Am sending your sewing to you. Hope you haven't needed it but guess you have. Your flowers look pretty good and seem to be growing. Tell the boys the rabbit is here having a good time. He is a pretty thing – and so good. It's a little cloudy now but seems no rain. Kathrine Pinckney gets

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1 Cora Jane Guilford Graves had had at least one stroke by this time.

2 Grandma Graves, of course, had no air conditioning.

married Saturday at home – had a shower last night at Mrs. Muir’s. Elsie<sup>3</sup> went.

Well Florence there isn’t much news of interest. Everybody is well and feeling pretty good.

I went to Columbia back with Boots,<sup>4</sup> had a pleasant trip. He came back with me and drove Elsie’s mother back in her car. He is getting real tired of school and so glad he hasn’t much longer. His work is fine – am so glad he has done so well.

Remember me to Muriel, your mother, and Nanny<sup>5</sup>. I guess you are all enjoying each other. May God bless every one of you and help you all have a good time. Tell the boys a letter will follow.

With much love,

Mother G.

*Letter of Harriet Inez Cadugan,  
(my great grandmother, “Nanny”)  
to my father, John S. Graves, Jr.<sup>6</sup>*

November 20, 1950

John,

You know I was very fond of you until the last winter I was with you. Your treatment of Florence changed my opinion of you. First, she persuaded you to go to the doctor. You would not follow his advice. Then your insurance. You said “No damn woman would

3 Her son Woodrow’s wife.

4 Her school-teacher son, Eugene.

5 Mother’s sister, mother, and grandmother, all of whom lived in Philadelphia.

6 My mother, Florence Graves, and Jerry, Steve, and I were living with Muriel Rubert, mother’s sister, when we first arrived in Philadelphia 1950. My mother’s mother, Florence Inez Rubert, and her mother, our great grandmother, Harriet Inez Cadugan, whom we called “Nannie,” also lived with Muriel. Nannie’s letter expresses clearly her thoughts about the situation between my mother and father.

get your money to spend,” and you thought of putting it in your mother’s name. Then you said you only wanted to allow \$100.00 per month to support and clothe those boys. Florence could “support herself.” She risked her life for those three boys and was a good, faithful wife and devoted mother – and that’s how much you appreciated her.

Florence said, “Nannie, if John could be relieved of his debts I think he would not be in this state. I wish I could help him.” After much thought she humiliated herself to get help for you.<sup>7</sup> At the same time you were saying to me, “I wish I had married a girl that would have helped me in my business,” which Florence had always done. She composed and wrote your business letters, had made contacts for you, helped on your books and payroll, all of which you and your brothers should have been able to do. You continually were complaining about her. I thought – Yes, you should have married your own kind – a woman that was content with pots & pans, a washing machine and listening to stories about oysters and crabs all her life.

Florence should have married a diplomat or Senator in Washington, where her brilliant mind would be appreciated. She tried to get you interested in a garden, you dug out some, left it and that was the finish. You would not help her with the Youth Group, call for or take the young girls home when you had nothing to do. You could have helped with the painting of the Community house. You did not assist her. No one in Bluffton ever had the courage to found and manage a Community House. You should have been so proud of her, helped and encouraged her.

You told Muriel you did not intend to be a baby sitter. It was your duty as well as Florence’s to stay with your children. She went one evening a week to choir practice and once every two weeks to the Youth Group. She had nothing at home. You usually left the supper table and spent your evenings with your family,<sup>8</sup> most times forgetting to say good night to the children. Florence got the tail end of the evening.

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7 Mother secured a loan for Daddy shortly before she left for Philadelphia.

8 Daddy’s mother and father lived very close by.

You did not like company, or card games. There was no social life and you expect a woman to be satisfied? When you drank no one could sleep all night. You kept the children awake with your banging the doors, pulling on the lights and using vile names to Florence. Then you expect a woman to be happy. You took Queenie<sup>9</sup> away from her and forced her to work far beyond her strength. She is so thin it is pitiful. You knew the children's shoes were almost on the ground, that they had no decent clothes, that the best they ever have had, and Florence also, has been given to them. Then you send only a few dollars that wouldn't keep one child, then stop altogether, then let Florence go without a coat, and then send her trunk C.O.D.! You should be ashamed of yourself.

You drove Florence to do just what she has done, her only mistake was that she should have done it years ago, before the boys were old enough to remember all that they do. I never repeated any of this to Florence while I was there, I kept quiet, but I have told her since.

Now the things I brought from Saratoga<sup>10</sup> were not given to Florence, only to use until such time as her mother would want them. Among those are the dog's head picture and the beautiful personal things of her mother's and mine. She does not ask for anything you bought although the law says all belongs to the wife. She wants her personal things, which she should have. Had you sent money to support and clothe your children things could be excused to some extent.

No one influenced Florence in any way. She had all she could stand, then you dare to say you think her mind was affected? It's a good thing I was not down there. God help anyone that passed one remark about her! I have lived with her five winters. She is a devoted, loving, Christian girl. I don't know anyone as patient with your quarrelsomeness. If I have to go and testify I will gladly do it. How would you like Louisa to know what you have told me? You are not supposed to kiss and tell.

The boys look and act like little gentlemen. It is simply impossible to bring them up in Bluffton properly. You know it and have

9 The hired housekeeper and part time caretaker of Jerry, Steve and me.

10 Nannie spent much of her early life in Saratoga, NY.

said so. You should have agreed to a year's trial separation. You never played with your children, never tossed a ball, never read to them. You may miss them in a way, but you spent little time with them and had little patience with them.

At no time has Mrs. Rubert's<sup>11</sup> mind been "affected." She is the same today as always, a fine very wonderful woman. Thank God she is well and able to help us all. I don't know what I would do without her. As for Florence her work is all brain work. She is a wonderful girl. Anyone daring to insinuate otherwise is indeed "affected." I wonder if you ever stop and think of all the insults, vile names and accusations she had to bear, and that her life and the life of the children were in danger?

Every man that was pleasant to her, you accused her unmercifully of being unfaithful. Even that good Christian minister Mr. Bell. When dear Eloise<sup>12</sup> came to the house anyone could see you had a crush on her. The night of your birthday, when she was leaving, you picked up her hand and said, "that beautiful hand with the pretty rings on it, and that pretty arm with the bracelets." So silly. They were all laughing at you. When Celeste<sup>13</sup> was there you devoted all your time to her. She would kiss you goodnight and not Florence. You would spend your time over at the other house.<sup>14</sup> You would also go there when your sister Mary had a very pretty girl visitor.

Florence tried in every way to be a good wife, stood neglect, insults and abuse until she could take no more. She is a devoted mother. Her children come first with her. She cooks their breakfast, packs their lunch, and they go to school immaculate. She cooks them a fine dinner every night and takes them to Sunday School. They are neglected in no way.<sup>15</sup>

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11 Mother's mother, Harriet's daughter.

12 Harry Cram's wife.

13 Mother's friend from New York that came for a visit.

14 Daddy's parents' house.

15 It is not certain that this letter was ever completed, sent to or received by my father, John S. Graves, Jr.

*Florence R. Graves' Letter to  
Senator Brantley Harvey*

December 13, 1950

Senator W. Brantley Harvey  
Beaufort  
South Carolina

Dear Brantley,

It is unpleasant to have to write to you under these circumstances but we have always been the best of friends and I respect your integrity and, having been told that John has consulted you about our marital affairs, I feel that it is only fair that I present my case in so far as it will enable a better understanding all the way around.

I do not know what or how much he has told you but I can imagine. However, I know that John knows in his heart that I had every cause in the world to leave and did so only as a last resort. You know, or you should, from the contacts we have had, what kind of a wife I have been. You know how I fought for him, for his interests, tried in every way possible to help him. I endeavored to further his business, to make good contacts for him. I worked like a Trojan digging up that data on the grant for him.<sup>16</sup>

I assisted him with his court affairs, helped him with his payroll, helped him with his labor, built up his prestige, and tried to bolster his own morale. God knows, no wife can do more than that. I even managed to help refinance him when he was down and desperate not long ago. He has told me that I never helped him and showed small appreciation through the years.

On the other hand, he has also admitted sometimes what I have done and called me wonderful. Be that as it may, I do not claim anything other than I have been a wife, in the true sense of the

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<sup>16</sup> Making it possible for the Petitioner to greatly increase his holdings of State leases on oyster beds.

word. My home was never neglected, nor my children, as you, too, have seen with your own eyes. The things I did in the community I did with my whole heart to benefit the community and loved doing it. But I also did them as an outlet for I had no companionship and nothing but unhappiness, bitterness, depression at home, not to mention the disgraceful occurrences that I will not go into here.

For years, I tried to go on forgetting the things he said and did, knowing that he was under a strain, and knowing that he was fundamentally good, or so I believed. But there comes a time when one can take no more. Not only that, it was no longer a fit environment for the children, there was no mental stability as a background, there was not even physical safety for them or me at times. It was more wrong to stay than to go.

I had begged John repeatedly to stop his drinking. He had confessed to me and to others how wrong he knew he was. But he, himself, was caught in its web, his mind did not seem able to readjust, in fact it grew more and more warped.

Believe me, I feel very, very sorry for him. There is always a great sadness in something like this. I told him when I left, and I still feel, that perhaps he will be just as much better off without me as I without him. I had become an obsession with him and we were certainly making each other miserable. Certainly, no human being could stand it any longer. Even his own mother and father told me they could not expect me to take any more of his abuse.

I do not want to say any more about this. It might be helpful, if it is necessary, for you to talk with G. G. Dowling later. He can tell you some of the things that happened as I was driven to talk with someone before I left, the situation was so bad. He also told me at that time he had consulted you. I learned later that he had not but now I understand he has.

What I wanted to tell you about, so that you could advise John concerning it, is the status of the personal belongings I left in Bluffton. These consist of some trunks, barrels of china, pictures, books, the children's things, and four good pieces of furniture which I took with me to Bluffton before I married John. All of them were presents to me from my family before my marriage. John did not pay one cent for them. In fact, he has not had to even

clothe us. My sister has bought all of my clothes throughout my married years and most of the children's things were either bought by her or made by my grandmother or bought from money other than his. These are simple facts that I am stating. He will have to admit them, if you ask.

He knew, for instance, that the children's feet were on the ground when they left Bluffton. He never thought or cared about that. He agreed to send me fifteen dollars a week (that's all I asked for then, knowing he was hard up at the time) for the three months in which I was to think it over again. He claims I was to return at the end of the three months. I never told him that. I said I would return and tell him how matters stood, although I was pretty sure then that I could feel no differently. I told him I very probably would never come back to stay. He could scarcely expect me to.

During the three months, he was very remiss about sending the money at all. He would go two or three weeks without sending anything and once he had the nerve to send me a \$25.00 war bond that my father had bought for me and the children years ago. Since the first week of August, he has not sent anything at all, except a present for Stephen's birthday which was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of that month.

He has not written the children except for a Thanksgiving card and a note about one inch long on it. He still has the war bonds that I bought for the children with presents they received and hard-saved quarters. These I want him to send immediately so that I may keep them for the children. And I have asked him repeatedly to allow Naomi McCracken,<sup>17</sup> or someone like that I could trust, who knew my things and could do it with the least embarrassment, to gather them up for me so that I could send a truck to pick them up. I have not even asked him to pay for their shipment. He has no legal right to hold my personal belongings, as you know. I have tried to impress upon him that I do not want to cause him or myself any further embarrassment. It seems to me that we can do things in a civilized manner. It is childishly stubborn of him to try to hold them. If he persists, I shall have to take legal action and I cannot

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17 H. E. McCracken's wife, Mother's life long friend.



see the sense in it, Brantley. It will only be damaging to him in every sense, expensive for us both and time-consuming.

I really need my things as I have my own place, now, and want them to make my children's home. They want their little things, too, and cannot understand why their daddy will not send them. As far as the children are concerned, they are well-satisfied. They knew when we left what the situation was. They had already heard and seen too much for their years. It has left a scar upon them that I shall try to erase. They are well and like it here and are doing well in school. They go to Sunday School at a very fine church and are leading normal lives.

What you must remember, and I am saying this as a friend, in strict confidence, and only perhaps because he has consulted you legally so that I must say it, is that in dealing with John, you are not dealing with an entirely normal situation. He is high-strung, not well, and filled with many abnormal ideas at the present. As you have noticed in the past, he is not very reasonable and is hard to reach.

Please, Brantley, do what you can to get him to let my things leave peaceably and let me hear from you regarding this situation. I have a very fine position and was lucky enough to start off on a good salary so that I can provide reasonably well for my children but, even at that, it's going to be hard enough.

I would like you to talk with Charles Getsinger, too, in Ridgeland, and Rev. Haynesworth in Grahamville. He was my minister. He knows everything. If you talk with Charlie, do it privately, not at his house. He was with John on a recent trip here and talked with me.<sup>18</sup> He told me how he felt about everything. He married John's sister, you know. Mr. Haynesworth talked with John at great length and tried to do everything he could. I stayed three months longer than I was going to in Bluffton because he asked me to.

I will appreciate an early answer from you, Brantley, and I know that I can depend upon you.<sup>19</sup> Be honest with yourself, with me and with John. I am not asking anything that is detrimental to John. As I say, I feel nothing but pity for him. I hope that he will

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18 November 28, 1950.

19 There is no surviving evidence that Mr. Harvey ever answered this letter.

someday be able to make a man of himself. I want nothing but what is good for him, hope his business will be successful and that he will find happiness. All I ask is that he give me what belongs to me when I send for it without further trouble and let us both live in peace. I told him if he ever proves to me that he has the children's best interests at heart, that I can thoroughly trust him with them, and that he intends to act as a father should in every way, (and by that I include the thought that he should contribute something to their support), I will allow him to see them. Right now, they don't even feel they want to go to him at all. But I am trying to keep the feeling in them that he is their father and loves them and they must love him.

Certainly, I dislike having to lay all this bare, as it were. There is much more I could tell you but won't. Suffice it to say, the lawyers I have talked to, including G. G., all tell me there isn't a court in the world that would not grant me complete custody of the children. I could have pressed several charges but do not want to. I hate messes. Besides, I do not think one gains anything from hurting another. He must live the rest of his life in South Carolina and Bluffton, in particular. I don't want to ruin his life there. Everyone was shocked at this because no one suspected anything for the simple reason that I hid it all from the public in general, even though it has been going on for many years.

I will wait for your answer, Brantley, before doing anything else. But I have waited a long time, now, unreasonably. And I need my things. I intend to get them but I want to do it nicely.

Happy Holiday season to you and yours! I am sorry you have to be involved in this. My happiness this Christmas will be in seeing my children happy, God grant.

You can address me % Post Office Box 391, Philadelphia 5, Pa.

Sincerely,

Florence R. Graves

## *Grandma Graves' Letter #2 to Florence Graves*

March 1, 1951

My Dear Florence,

I hate so bad not to hear from you and the dear children, write to me dear, you do not know how it hurts us not to hear from you all, and their father would love to get a word from them.

Know you are glad to see signs of spring, do hope it is around the corner. Fred<sup>20</sup> is in Japan. He is such a dear, good boy. Scrib<sup>21</sup> is in Birmingham, Alabama, working with the Eastern Airlines. I hope he does well. Boots<sup>22</sup> is still teaching – likes it better – expect him to come home for Easter.

How I miss you and the boys, you'll never know. Tell them "Easter Rabbit" will soon be here, so be good. Cora Jane<sup>23</sup> was here Tuesday. She looks well but misses you, too. Beverly Ann and Sister<sup>24</sup> talk of all you folks, don't quite understand everything, but they are better off to know nothing.

Naomi is home from the hospital. Looks pretty well and getting on fine. Woodie and Elsie<sup>25</sup> seem to be getting on fine. News is very scarce here, and remember you are all missed. Try and make it home soon.

Ben Harrison died last week. We miss him having lived next door so long. Lucy's father, Mr. Copeland, died Tuesday and Mr. Hancock yesterday. So many deaths.

Well, I hope you are getting on and feeling well. Do write me Florence, telling me all about yourself – for I love you and miss you so. You were so good and kind to me always. Will write you again soon. May God bless you and those dear boys. With lots of love to all.

Devotedly,  
Mother Graves

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20 Her youngest son, who later died in Korea August 31, 1951. Grandmother Graves had a stroke upon learning of Fred's death and died October 7, 1951.

21 Nickname for her son Charles.

22 Nickname for Grandma Graves' son, Eugene, the school teacher.

23 Grandma Graves' daughter, Daddy's sister.

24 Cora Jane's Daughters.

25 Grandma Graves' son, Woodrow, and his wife.

*Copy of H.E McCracken's Letter  
to Florence Graves*

Bluffton High School

Office of Superintendent  
Bluffton, South Carolina

April 27, 1951

Mrs. Florence R. Graves  
c/o Mr. Oscar F. Davis  
7 East 44th Street  
Savannah, Georgia

Dear Mrs. Graves:

The school has tried to be cooperative in permitting you to see your children during the period of litigation involving the children.

The visits, under the circumstances, have been disconcerting to the school and the teachers say the children are missing time they need in their classes.

Your lawyer, Mr. Hall, has been contacted to ask that you arrange to see the children other than school hours. School visits will be limited to five minutes in the future.

The children have more outside time than they do in school for lengthy visits.

You are respectfully requested to comply with this request.

Yours truly,



H.E. McCracken  
Superintendent

cc: Mr. Hall, Attorney at Law, Beaufort, S.C.  
Chairman Board of Trustees, Bluffton, S.C.  
W.B. Harvey, Attorney at Law, Beaufort, S.C.  
J.S. Graves, Jr., Bluffton, S.C.

## *Tombstone Thoughts*<sup>26</sup> The Historic Bluffton Cemetery

The nip in the air this morning is sharpened by a freshening early spring breeze making its way among the tall pines, naked hickories and old oaks, causing last fall's leaves to dance around my feet and the Spanish moss to quiver and sway overhead. Aside from nature's interruptions, stillness and silence reign in this place.

An assortment of scattered and lichen-splotched benches provides more than adequate seating for the few sporadic visitors: the curious, a dutiful distant relative or two, an occasional grieving spouse, child or parent.

Thousands have walked these paths leaving hundreds behind them – the grave stones sprinkling the forest floor attest to the many who have come and gone, the far smaller number who have come and stayed, and the growing number who have come and gone and returned to stay. Behind every stone is a story – no, many stories – most so corrupted by hazy recollections and repeated telling as to now bear little resemblance to fact. Shakespeare wrote, “The evil men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones.” (Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 2) His words do not reflect my experience. Rather, time has a way of tempering our memories with often undeserved kindness or at least gracious silence; that's as it should be – nothing's to be gained by speaking ill of the dead.

Garbed in traditional Anglican attire for such services, late this afternoon my specter will again haunt these familiar environs with Prayer Book and dirt in hand to remind those assembled of what could be. In time a new stone will take its place among the old to mark the spot and evoke future thoughts of what once was – and stillness and silence will have their way again.

*Notes by JSG, III:* Many members of the Graves, Guilford, and Peeples families are buried in the Bluffton cemetery: Mary Elizabeth Graves, her brother, John Samuel Graves, Jr. (my father), her other brothers and sister, their mother and father (my grandmother and grandfather Graves) and my great grandfather and grandmother Guilford. My cousin Luke Peeples, the composer and my mentor, is also buried there. All united in death.

Father Owens' remarks about the Bluffton Cemetery ring true: there is an over-arching spirituality about the place. It is good to go there for quiet reflection and meditation. Whenever I visit the cemetery I always sense the presence of great spirits now gone – but not forgotten. The memories of their lives fills the space. Some of the stories of those lives have been recounted on my website, *graveshouse.org*, and in Andrew Peeples' book, *Bluffton Boy*.

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26 Reprinted with permission from the author, The Very Reverend Dr. Charles E. Owens, III, Rector of Bluffton's Church of the Cross