

felt especially good to finish a chapter and know I was one step closer to that distant goal. One chapter down, forty-eight to go. . . . More than a million black soldiers help the U.S. win World War II. . . . I keep going. . . . Primus King, a black barber from Columbus, sues Georgia Democrats and forces the state to abandon whites-only primary elections. . . . I keep going.

Dad's completed chapters ended with the civil rights movement. His modern chapters were in a rougher form, covering events up to the Forsyth County brotherhood march in 1987. Some of the paragraphs in these chapters consisted of only the germ of an idea and a footnote tagged to a newspaper clipping. By the time I got to that segment of the book, I had been infected by his zeal, so I brought the manuscript into the 1990s. I was more concerned with completing the record than with any criticism that might be leveled at me for meddling with the text. I know Dad would have wanted me to put in the extra information; it extended his train of thought.

As the July 1991 deadline approached, Judy and I were about to have our first child and my life was getting a bit crowded. With great relief, I finished the manuscript and shipped it off on September 21, 1991. My amended version was forty-five chapters long: nearly a thousand pages of narrative text plus notes and bibliography—still a bit long, but I was happy with the final product.

Our first child was due on September 28. We barely got the nursery ready and, thankfully, Laurel didn't arrive until a week later. I started writing another novel. In spring 1992, my editor sent me a critique of *The Way It Was in the South* by Herbert Aptheker, whom Dad regarded as the pre-eminent



*Grant says his father's book is inextricably linked to other facets of his life. He was scouring page proofs of *The Way It Was in the South* when his wife went into labor with their second child—son Nathan (shown above).*

scholar in African-American studies. Aptheker called the book "an almost incredible labor." I heartily agreed.

Laurel had a new baby brother and I had finished my second novel before Dad's book came out, for there were publishers' delays. In 1993, I reworked the manuscript and the footnotes. After that came Index Hell, and after that—the book. It ended up being 624 pages—roughly half the length of Dad's original work, but still comprehensive and true to his plan. After all the editing, it was actually pretty fast-paced—and seamless, I hope.

It hit the bookstores in December 1993, and Mom and I were thrilled when we could actually hold the book in our hands and call our rescue mission a success.

I wish Dad could be here to see the reception his book has gotten. It has received good reviews. It has been featured prominently in bookstores. And Georgia Public Television has

expressed interest in a dramatic series based on it.

Some people will find fault with *The Way It Was in the South* for it is not a romantic look at Georgia's past and it will rip gaping holes in some Southerners' cherished beliefs about their homeland and its history. Georgia led the nation in lynchings for decades. And virtually without exception, lynchings weren't punished, which says much about society as a whole. Some anti-black outrages in Georgia's past were so wantonly vile, it was hard to believe a church-going people who called themselves civilized could do such things.

In the course of his research, Dad also came across many unsung black heroes who deserved a better break than they got from traditional historians—the black Reconstruction legislators, for example, who were driven from office and later vilified as part of a conspiracy to deny black political rights altogether. It was Dad's goal to give them—and others—a measure of justice. I'm glad I could help.

Events surrounding the book are inextricably linked with the rest of my life. Editing a history book even changed the way I look at time.

Just before our second child, Nathan, arrived, the publisher sent me page proofs. I took them with me when Judy and I checked into the hospital. When Judy's labor began in earnest, I was scouring page 306 for typos. It was 1918: black Georgians were buying war bonds and black inventor Julius Hart of Columbus was designing aerial bombs for the military.

I will tell Nathan that he was born during World War I. Dad would have liked that.

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