



# Happily Sometimes After: Discovering Stories from Twelve Generations of an American Family

*Andie Tucher*

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For more than four hundred years, members of the author's family have been telling stories about their American lives. They have told of impassioned elopements and heart-breaking kidnaps, of hairbreadth escapes and shocking murders, of bigamists, changelings, patriots, Indians, fires, floods, and how the great-grandmother of Chief Justice John Marshall married the pirate Blackbeard by mistake.

In this beautifully written work, Andie Tucher considers family stories as another way to look at history, neither from the top down nor the bottom up but from the inside out. She explores not just what happened?everywhere from Jamestown to Boonesborough, from the bloody field at Chickamauga to the metropolis of the Gilded Age?but also what the storytellers thought or wished or hoped or feared happened. She offers insights into what they valued, what they lost, how they judged their own lives and found meaning in them. The narrative touches on sorrow, recompense, love, pain, and the persistent tension between hope and disappointment in a nation that by making the pursuit of happiness thinkable also made unhappiness regrettable.

Based on extensive research in archives, local history societies, and family-history sources as well as conversations and correspondence, *Happily Sometimes After* offers an intimate and unusual perspective on how ordinary people used stories to imagine the world they wished for, and what those stories reveal about their relationships with the world they actually had.

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