

Appendix 4 (AFBR.02): Book Review of The Meal is Gone by Riley McGinnis, 2002.

This charming family oriented 141 page, 5 by 8 inch book is about life in Wayne County, Kentucky, where modernity was slow to arrive. The author recounts his own personal experience and draws upon family memories, going back to the early 1900s. The setting is in the deeply rural area of Wayne Co., KY known as Slickford. There Upchurches and allied families settled in the early 1800s. The local, hard to reach, Dishman Cemetery has hundreds of burials and, to the extent that monuments could be afforded, the inscriptions tell part of the story.

But Riley uses his own personal experience to tell the story. He starts with the fact that a supply of corn meal processed from a defunct grinder is about to be exhausted. While lamenting the loss of the source of this rural food staple, he recounts how his relative got in the corn grinding business in the first place. This leads him to tell the fuller story of the people who lived in the Dry Hollow community downstream from the very remote Jim Town and upstream from the better known Slickford, all about 20 miles south of Monticello, the county seat of Wayne County.

The telling in this book is a potent record of how people in this time and place made a living the old-fashioned buggy and wagon way, even as city people were enjoying modern automobiles.

Riley Ray McGinnis is linked to the Upchurches in more than one way. His wife, nee Peggy Jo Upchurch, is a descendant of Moses Upchurch, head of a line in the George Upchurch/Shadrack Upchurch subclan. Riley is a descendant of nee Clarinda Jane Upchurch, a granddaughter of Silas Upchurch, who was head of another line in the same subclan. Clarinda, a Wayne Co. native, married James McGinnis, who was born in 1861 in Pall Mall, TN and moved as a child to Wayne County, KY with his mother. Jim and Clarinda lived in Jim Town and are buried in the Dishman Cemetery at Slickford.

Anyone whose heritage tracing leads to rural Wayne County, KY will be delighted to read this down-to-earth story about how things were in the old days. Riley tells about their log houses, about transportation and about how they eked out a living. This is so much more interesting than reading a dry history book.

Of the 22 Upchurch clans in America, each headed by a member of the fifth generation of the family in this country, the one headed by George Upchurch has a very strong focal point in a single county- Wayne County, KY. Certainly at least 10,000 descendants of George Upchurch trace their heritage back to this one county. Thus the book tells a part of the story of the heritage of a large number of people covering Upchurches, but going beyond to many allied families – Parmley, Dishman, Keeton, and more.

While this book makes a big contribution to the history of the Upchurches and allied families, it also reveals that much remains to be organized. Exactly where did each of the

children and grandchildren of George Upchurch live? Can we augment information found on their tombstones? What about details on the streams, roads, stores, schools, etc., etc., that impacted their lives. Much of this information is available to be lifted up from the files. The more like Riley telling the story, the better.

We have been unable to find available copies of this book online. For the good of the entire George Upchurch family and allied families, perhaps someone will step forward and help us increase the availability of Riley's book.

-Phil Upchurch, Reviewer