

Appendix 5 (AFBR.03): Book Review of The Upchurch Story by Olive A. Morgan, First edition, 1976. Second edition, 1978.

This 287 page pure Upchurch book, together with the 1972 Upchurch Family by Etta Belle (Lewter) West, constitute major leaps forward in giving form to the Upchurch family in America. Olive Morgan was late to the party, as West and her cabal spearheaded by Martha Lucy (Upchurch) Tidd had already been assiduously working the records for some two decades when Morgan commenced serious work in 1965 by visiting Wayne County, KY. The work of West and Tidd and their collaborators was generously shared with Morgan, which Morgan graciously acknowledged. The unfolding of our American Upchurch story is reminiscent of the creation of the Gospels, with each version relying on earlier materials.

Both books describe the Upchurch family somewhat like five blind men, having never seen an elephant, based on what part of the beast they first touched. So it was that both West and Morgan make a stab at telling the broader story starting in England and then presenting outlines of whatever sections of the family that was available to them or caught their fancy. Much of what they wrote about our heritage in England and our forebears in colonial America needs serious adjustment and certain parts are just plain wrong. Their strongest chapters are those that deal with their Revolutionary War era relatives in their direct line. This would be for Moses Upchurch (1753-1853), in the case of West, and George Upchurch (1757-1830), in the case of Morgan.

These comments having been made, we move on to state that Olive Morgan was a tireless, dedicated, extremely productive Upchurch researcher. Our broader Upchurch family is deeply indebted to her for her ground-breaking Upchurch work. It is fitting that this review of her book be, as well, a tribute to her. She and this reviewer established a close bond and I shall couch this review in personal terms.

In the early 1970s, as my latent interests in Upchurch family history ramped up, I made contact with Olive Morgan. Then in the summer of 1975, a business trip took me from St. Louis to Kansas City. A bonus was a chance to meet with Morgan. She was to pick me up at my hotel and we were to lunch in her home. This only took place after Olive and her daughter had collected me, and daughter Kathryn determined that her mother could be trusted to host a lunch alone for her male collaborator. We had a delightful session all about Upchurch history. She proudly showed off her new typewriter, from whose keys would come her book a year later. Olive encouraged me to start the *Upchurch Bulletin*, which I did in 1980. She allowed me free use of her book and furnished me with her complete address list for cooperators and purchasers of her book.

Morgan's treatment of the family of George Upchurch (1757-1830) is very detailed and the result of a huge amount of hard work in collecting names, dates, places, etc. The occasional pictures included are important contributions to the work. Morgan carefully depicts George as he was born, raised, and married in Brunswick Co., VA. She documents the move to Iredell Co., NC prior to 1790 and the completion of his family there. This is followed by the migration of George and his already married children to the Little South Fork of the Cumberland River in Wayne Co., KY in the 1810-1820 era. From the records Morgan presents, one can grasp the expansion of the family on the Little South Fork and on to nearby Otter Creek. Son Joseph finds himself in Fentress County, TN and ever since, the study of the George Upchurch family has required close examination of the records in these two nearby counties across the state line from each other. Raw material is provided which will allow us to chart the path of

segments of the George Upchurch family to distant counties in Kentucky, Tennessee, and to other states. This diaspora was accelerated by the events of World War II. While two centuries of spreading of the George Upchurch clan is factual, a fascinating aspect remains the original situation of deep rural isolation, the remnants of which we can see today. A significant consequence of this situation was the frequent marriages of cousins. Another was frontier justice a la the Hatfield and McCoy mode. A challenge for the family is to reach back and record this aspect of the heritage of the George Upchurch family before it recedes beyond our grasp.

The fact that Morgan found and published blocks of Upchurch family information from distantly related parts of the family leads one to need a map of what was included. The following may be helpful:

I. Michael Upchurch I (1624-1681)

A. Richard Upchurch I

1. John Upchurch I

a. James Upchurch III - Morgan, pg. 31

Generation 5

i. John Upchurch III

(I) Samuel Upchurch - Morgan, pgs. 159-244

(II) John Upchurch VII - Morgan, pg. 42a

2. James Upchurch I

a. William Upchurch II - Morgan, pg. 32

Generation 5

i. John Upchurch IV

(I) Ambrose Upchurch - Morgan, pgs. 43-47

b. Richard Upchurch II - Morgan, pg. 32

Generation 5

i. Charles Upchurch - Morgan, pg. 34, 60-64b

Generation 5

ii. Nathan Upchurch I - Morgan, pg. 35, 42a

(I) Acril Upchurch -Morgan, pg. 42

Generation 5

iii. Richard Upchurch III

(I) Buckner Upchurch - Morgan, pgs. 48-59

c. Michael Upchurch III - Morgan, pg. 35

Generation 5

i. George Upchurch - Morgan, pgs. 35-38, 65-158

Generation 5

ii. Sherwood Upchurch - Morgan, pgs. 39-41

Generation 5

iii. William Upchurch IV -Morgan, pg. 38

From the above, one sees that Morgan reported to some degree on 8 of the 22 known Upchurch clans, each headed by a member of the fifth generation in the family. She touched more lightly on several more, but not on all. From this sketch, one sees she gave much attention to her own clan headed by George Upchurch. The only plausible reason as to why she lifted up other families, such as the 85 pages devoted to the Samuel Upchurch family, is that the data became available and she seized it because it was available.

Having given Morgan much well deserved praise for her Upchurch research and book, it is; nevertheless, appropriate to point out some missteps as follows:

- Like others, Morgan overreached in portraying the heritage of Michael Upchurch I who came to America in 1638. This is true for his ancestor, for his supposed connection with Little Gidding and for the connection of our family to Upchurch in the shire of Kent, England. In the issues of the *Upchurch Bulletin*, one finds all of this clarified.

- On page 42a, Morgan presents the Charles Richard Upchurch (1875-1938) Family and posits that he is a son of Green Berry Upchurch and a grandson of Hubbard Upchurch. Details in the *Upchurch Bulletin* show that this Charles Richard Upchurch was a son of a different Green Berry Upchurch who was, in fact, a son of John Upchurch VII, a son of John Upchurch III.
- On page 60, Morgan refers to a Benjamin Upchurch in Georgia as a nephew or brother of Revolutionary War soldier Charles Upchurch. Later research shows this Benjamin to have been the son of Harmon Upchurch.

We may forgive Morgan in the above and few more such transgressions as she was struggling to fit the flotsam and jetsam of family history data in to a coherent story, which West also did imperfectly. Since that time, more facts have been uncovered and our story of the first five generations of the American Upchurch family can now be set forth with more completeness and confidence, admitting that there are still some pieces of the puzzle to be made to fit. But when Morgan addresses the structure of the George Upchurch family, she rarely misses a stitch.

This book would be a valuable one for any member of the George Upchurch family to have. Unfortunately, it is out of print. Fortunately, the many issues of the *Upchurch Bulletin*, all now available online, cover much of what is in Morgan's book. Current efforts to enroll the family under the program of Upchurch and Allied Families Association, Inc. will build upon Morgan's work and present an updated version of the George Upchurch family.

To do justice to Olive Morgan one is invited to visit Volume 6, No. 3 of the *Upchurch Bulletin*, dated July, 1985. This issue is dedicated to Morgan and presents a lovely photo of her provided by daughter Kathryn. The tribute to her there penned ends with a poignant letter from Kathryn reporting on her mother's passing on August 17, 1985. She has been gone from us now nearly 30 years, but for those of us who are steeped in family vibes, she is still with us in spirit. May she rest in peace.

-Robert Phillip Upchurch,
Reviewer