THE CHITTICK FAMILY HISTORY

On 30th and 31st August last year, the descendants of Gustavus and Jane Chittick commemorated the centenary of the arrival of the family in Australia. In honour of the occasion members of the family have compiled a 68-page booklet tracing the lives and careers of members of various branches of the family.

They started with few material advantages. While still residing in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, Gustavus was killed steeple-chasing, leaving Jane a widow with eight children. She carried on the farm for some years, then decided to emigrate to Australia, where her brother James Moffitt was already settled at Gerringon. On the voyage she contracted typhoid fever and died a few weeks after her arrival. It was found that the money she had sent ahead had been misappropriated, and the young Chitticks were left with ten shillings each with which to start a new life. But, says the author of the booklet, "these young people had inherited from Gustavus and Jane an even greater legacy: something of their courage, character and high ideals, plus ambition and a capacity for hard work." The booklet is a record of how they battled through, of solid and well-earned if unspectacular success, and of faithful service to their communities and their church. Most of them were connected with dairying and cattle-breeding in Illawarra or on the North Coast; many have been active in local government and in agricultural societies.

As one reader remarked, the booklet should be required reading for the work-shy and strike-happy—they might find that in comparison with the pioneers they were not so badly off.

The booklet is obviously a labour of love and a work of family piety. It is also a valuable record of the fortunes of one family, typical in many ways; exceptional perhaps in their foresight, capacity for hard work, and close-knit family ties. It was such people who were the backbone of the old rural Australia.

(“The Chittick Family History”; privately printed).