



Food and Everyday Life on Kentucky Family Farms, 1920-1950 (Kentucky Remembered: An Oral History Series)

John Van Willigen, Anne Van Willigen

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The foods Kentuckians love to eat today -- biscuits and gravy, country ham and eggs, soup beans and cornbread, fried chicken and shucky beans, and fried apple pie and boiled custard -- all were staples on the Kentucky family farms in the early twentieth century. Each of these dishes has evolved as part of the farming lifestyle of a particular time and place, utilizing available ingredients and complementing busy daily schedules. Though the way of life associated with these farms in the first half of the twentieth century has mostly disappeared, the foodways have become a key part of Kentucky's cultural identity. In *Food and Everyday Life on Kentucky Family Farms, 1920--1950*, John van Willigen and Anne van Willigen examine the foodways -- the practices, knowledge, and traditions found in a community regarding the planting, preparation, consumption, and preservation -- of Kentucky family farms in the first half of the last century. This was an era marked by significant changes in the farming industry and un rural communities, including the introduction of the New Deal market quota system, the creation of the University of Kentucky Agricultural Extension Service, the expansion of basic infrastructures into rural areas, the increased availability of new technologies, and the massive migration from rural to urban areas. The result was a revolutionary change from family-based subsistence farming to market-based agricultural production, which altered not only farmers' relationships to food in Kentucky but the social relations within the state's rural communities. Based on interviews conducted by the University of Kentucky's Family Farm Project and supplemented by archival research, photographs, and recipes, *Food and Everyday Life on Kentucky Family Farms, 1920--1950* recalls a vanishing way of life in rural Kentucky. By documenting the lives and experiences of Kentucky farmers, the book ensures that traditional folk and foodways in Kentucky's most important industry will be remembered.

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