Altina L. Waller in *Feud* (1988) and Ronald L. Lewis in *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside* (1998) examined the advancement of industrialization upon rural Appalachian communities in the last decades of the nineteenth century. For Waller, the focus on the "Hatfield and McCoy" feud shed light on capitalistic trespassing into regions that had historically defied its implementation. Waller argued that while the feud between the two families represented a mythologized folk tradition, their existence on the borders of Logan and Pike counties offered more to the historical canon than simple popular culture. Waller provided scholars with a thoroughly examined account of the natural character of interfamilial struggle. Her monograph, more significantly, underscored how "economic changes were transforming Appalachia from a region of self-sufficient and stable communities to one of dependency and poverty."[1] Using primary and secondary source material, *Feud* and *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside* thus rejected common misconceptions about western Appalachia and its dynamic communities

Lewis discussed that the introduction of the timber industry radically redefined the biosphere of a once environmentally diverse West Virginia. Within his monumental environmental history, the utilization of West Virginia as a microcosm of human-led climate change provides investigating scholars with insight into the destructive nature of the lumber industry upon pre-industrial Appalachia. However, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside* represented more than a timeline of deforestation. His attention to both the local attitudes of the timber industry, coupled with its economic impacts, provided historians a panorama of the destructive character of capitalism upon a reluctant rural populace. By combining social, economic, and environmental history into a digestible narrative, Lewis redefined the

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[1] Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfield's, McCoy's, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 12.

historiography of this region vis-à-vis a nuanced account of public perception and nineteenth-century civilization. Despite the thematic differences in each historians' typologies, both works revealed the consequences of Victorian-era capitalism upon the Appalachian communities within their area of study. The introduction of the timber industry into rural West Virginia, the construction of the Tug River railroad on the Kentucky-West Virginia border, and wage-earning capitalism upon suspicious, pre-industrial communities proffered an interesting sociopolitical study that remains critical for Appalachian historiography.

Waller introduced *Feud* by dispelling many assumptions that mountain communities represented "uncivilized," antagonistic idiosyncrasies; an appropriate rationale for a historian attempting to provide audiences the truths of the Hatfield-McCoy melodrama.[2] According to the historian, the world of the Hatfield and McCoy families delineated an agrarian, community-oriented society. Throughout the entirety of her first chapters, Waller continually dismissed, recounted, and gave agency to newer models of the academic investigation surrounding these families and the socio-cultural mechanisms that catalyzed their mutual animosity. For example, Waller noted the advent of this feud in two phases of her methodology. Between 1878 and 1882, the first half represented a pre-industrial, internal struggle that ushered an "unfolding of a set of social, economic, and cultural factors" that allowed vigilante justice a modicum of societal normalcy.[3] The second portion of the feud, however, represented the continuation of the previous half. Between 1887 and 1890, the introduction of new "circuit courts" within Pike County, and the influx of out-of-state capitalists, provided this feud with new, external sources of hostility.[4] For Waller, a facet of this capitalistic introduction into the region of the Tug River highlights

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[2] Ibid., 6.
[3] Ibid., 100.
[4] Ibid., 149-150.

why *Feud* remains a compelling social history. The historian attempted to redefine the historical understanding of "family," "violence," and "timing" that operantly transformed this region from a subsistence-based farming society to one that depended on the wage-earning capitalist industry.[5] The differences between these epochs not only underscored the invasive nature of the colonial industry, but Waller's attention to various primary source documents provided a well-defined understanding of local society and their reaction to "alien powers."[6]

Waller successfully cut away the mythology of this dispute and granted readers an often-sympathetic narrative of the actual turmoil. Shifting through documentation and personal accounts marred by fiction and misremembering, scholars now learn of dynamic characters, with contradicting desires and agendas. Most strikingly, Waller's analysis of women within the Tug Valley provided agency for individuals like Margret McCoy. Waller's account of Margret's divorce from her husband, Daniel McCoy, for laziness and cruelty, supplied the historical record with notions of early feminism not often highlighted within the study of this region.[7] Women like Margret, according to Waller, demonstrated that "wives were clearly subordinate to their husbands, but men did not have a license of absolute power over women."[8] Women within this society asserted their agency in the home and in the public domain. While misogyny remained an instrumental facet of pre-industrial patriarchy, women like Margret exercised forms of autonomy not often seen within the historiography of this region. For these additions to *Feud,* Waller's arguments provide significant additions to Appalachian feminist scholarship.

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[5] Ibid., 10-11.
[6] Ibid., 179.
[7] Ibid., 54-57.
[8] Ibid., 58.

Nevertheless, for an academic historian, Waller's attempt to provide an objective truth to both the Hatfield-McCoy feud and the encroaching capitalist regime from Northeastern industry fell short of its expectations. While the historian provided an abundance of documentation, such as William Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield's various legal and professional transactions, her historiography and methodology often contradicted this interpretation.[9] For example, in the introduction of her monograph, Waller rejected various models of historical theory such as the "modernizer" and "traditionalist" theories, as outlined by men like David Thelen, or "progressive" theories demonstrated by historians like E.P. Thompson.[10] Sociologists, journalists, and historians, like Virgil Carrington Jones, often diminished these societies to backwardness, stating "[Appalachians] were high strung, honest, proud, perhaps a little too proud for the wilderness in which they eked out their meager frontier living."[11] However, while Waller attempted to break away from these constructs, posing questions to her audience such as "if the feud came first, then industrial capitalism could not have caused it. What did?" Her inability to provide her audience with concrete answers left this monograph lacking in its scope.[12]

Despite Waller's awareness of these incongruencies within historical philosophy, her unwillingness to address these concepts in any meaningful manner diluted the overall effectiveness of her arguments. While Waller deserves praise for her investigative work in understanding the sociopolitics of this region, her lackluster application of modernization and Appalachian dominion diminished much of the positive aspects of the monograph. While the historian attempted to redefine the Hatfield-McCoy feud through the implementation of

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[9] Michael, Cassity, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 20, no. 1 (1989): 165–67.

[10] Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfield's, McCoy's, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 9, 170, 264.

[11] Ibid., 6.

[12] Ibid., 10.

historical theory, various contradictions left this monograph little more than an investigative piece. With no alternative explanations for the reasons of transformation within the Tug Valley community, *Feud* posed far more questions than answers.

Lewis, much like Waller, utilized West Virginia society to underscore the impacts of commercial deforestation. *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, however, filled in the gaps that *Feud* left unattended. The historian detailed the destruction of the "virgin forest" that transformed both West Virginia's biosphere and its socioeconomic structures.[13] Yet, the portrayal of deforestation and capitalist industry upon these rural communities only constituted one facet of Lewis' arguments; his attention to the social, political, and economic augmentations of the region highlighted an economic history locked inside of a social one.[14] The combination of the timber business, the reactions of the rural populace, and the avarice of out-of-state capitalists all served to transmute this region from pre- to post-industrialization. The utilization of Annales School, and "world-systems" doctrines of "periphery," served to underscore Lewis' overarching arguments: the existence of two Appalachias, "one composed of counties with growth centers, and another made up of interior rural farm counties."[15] Within Lewis' understanding of Appalachian hegemony, the development of the timber industry underscored the social transformations spearheaded by environmental disaster.

By detailing the developments of the timber industry, and the effects of capitalism upon the "backcountry" periphery, Lewis extended the scholarship that Waller attempted to

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[13] Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 18.

[14] Ronald D. Eller, *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 4, no. 2 (1998): 317–19.

[15] Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 21.

formulate.[16] However, while *Feud* and *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside* both

constructed a social history of Appalachia during the period of capitalist intervention, Lewis'

concentration on theory, historiography, and environmentalism provided readers with a more

comprehensive portrait of West Virginian society than Waller's account could offer. Yet, one

should note that Waller's account of the Hatfield-McCoy feud demonstrates scholarship when

social history first gained popularity. Despite its faults, this historical account acted as the

vanguard of its time- especially when one considers the state of Appalachian cataloging before

the wave of social interpretation. For Lewis, the established understanding of capitalism,

Western Appalachian society, and the cessation of the nineteenth century only served to bolster

the connections made in *Feud*- albeit in a more organized approach.

While Waller's monograph, written ten years before Lewis', left many of the questions

she attempted to answer unsolved, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside* offered a remedy

to a historical piece without concrete conclusions. His emphasis on both the environment, and

the society witnessing these transformations, offered historians with an understanding that

capitalism, climate change, and social structures are interconnected facets that must be studied in

tandem- not separately as in previous cataloging. Most significant, though, both works represent

a shift away from viewing Appalachian communities as ignorant, uncivilized, and barbaric. Both

monographs expressed that just because these communities, such as the one in Tug Valley,

rejected concepts like evangelical Christianity and wage capitalism, their participation in pre-

industrial, familial structures provides insight into the unexplored history of these regions.

Lewis and Waller would argue that stereotypes, mythologized dramas, and misconceptions of

this region not only created the invasive poverty throughout Western Appalachia, but these

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[16] Ibid., 17-19.

industries also perpetuated colonial systems of power. Devil Anse Hatfield, and the various semi-proletariat throughout West Virginia, offer scholarship with a multi-dimensional account of social systems outside of the capitalist machine. Both monographs, working together, provide scholars with an understanding of how environmental factors, coupled with the established social systems, offer context for furthering understandings of the region's past, present, and future.

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