Book Review, Sharon Hatfield, *Never Seen the Moon: The Trials of Edith Maxwell*.

Tracy A. Thomas, 1877

Publication Date
September 2006
Abstract
In Never Seen the Moon, journalist Sharon Hatfield chronicles the story of school teacher Edith Maxwell accused of murdering her coal-miner father in depression-era Appalachia. Her detective work brings together the threads of this story to provide headlines and trial transcripts from real life. There are surprises to be found as Hatfield tells the legal tale of the young and vibrant Edith battling her raging father through the trials and appeals as two juries of twelve men sentence her to a lifetime in prison. Never Seen the Moon seeks to integrate this account of Edith’s trials into a social commentary on Appalachia, yellow journalism, and women’s rights.

Hatfield’s book offers an interesting foray into the newspapers of yesteryear, raising difficult questions of battered women’s self-defense and media involvement in criminal trials that continue to plague the legal profession today. However, the review concludes that the book disappoints in its claim to analyze the gender issues of this era. The author's focus on Edith’s strategic failure to focus her criminal appeals on the jury question misses the critical issue of what impact a “jury of her peers” might have had for Edith.

Publication Title
Law and History Review

First Page
695

Last Page
696

Recommended Citation
http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/ua_law_publications/191