

Women of the Mountain South

IDENTITY,
WORK,
AND
ACTIVISM

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INTRODUCTION

A Tapestry of Voices

Women's History in the Mountain South

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As a river is born deep inside the earth in springs
that gather into streams and join to become a river,
so people's lives gather into families and communities
and become part of the river of history.

—Wilma Dykeman, *The Tall Woman*

Thoughts of the Mountain South, those mountain counties south of the Mason-Dixon Line and the flow of the Ohio River, evoke numerous images of a region and a mountain people often disassociated with northern Appalachia. Yet the images themselves are contradictory, depicting the Mountain South as an isolated yet resource-rich region, and its people as isolated, illiterate, poverty ridden, and coal dependent, or as a culturally rich region with picturesque mountains and inhabitants who value strong family and community ties, humor, and beautiful music. It is all of those things and more. This collection of essays examines the history of the Mountain South and, occasionally, its social, economic, and political ties to its neighboring states in the North and West through the eyes of mountain women.

Why use the term “Mountain South”? Recent scholarship in regional studies focuses on considering regions as social constructions

that change with time; therefore, to be in the forefront of discourse in regional studies, it is important to recognize that the term “Appalachia” is a social construction, and a recent one at that. Not only have the boundaries of Appalachia changed over time, but the name of the area within those boundaries has changed. Formerly referred to as the “southern mountains,” “southern backcountry,” “Mountain South,” or “southern uplands,” the region is now called “Appalachia.” William Goodell Frost defined it as “Appalachian America.” Perhaps the *idea* of Appalachia first appeared in Will Wallace Harney’s travelogue, “A Strange Land and a Peculiar People,” printed in *Lippincott’s Magazine* in 1873. Local color writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued the creation of Appalachia as a distinct region inhabited by unique people who possessed certain definable traits, both positive and negative. While “mountain people” were staunch individualists determined to live their lives free from outside interference, they also were tied to large kin networks. Respect for kin and dedication to caring for kin are qualities associated with residents of the region, yet the patriarchal structure of families often meant that women had few choices in life, except to bear and raise large families. Women were caring mothers, yet also lascivious in their sexual habits. Men were caring fathers, yet also domineering over their “womenfolk.” Mountaineers possessed common sense but were ignorant in regard to “book learning.” These Appalachian stereotypes and images, as well as many others, still hold power, even though they represent essentialist views of the region’s inhabitants. In 1990 anthropologist Allen W. Batteau stated that “Appalachia is a frame of reference, not a fact.”¹ Indeed, the region is, and has been, characterized by racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic class diversity. It is this diversity that this volume explores: there is no “Appalachian woman,” but there are many Appalachian women.

As a result, the history of women in the Mountain South is as rich and varied as its people and its regions. Although many women suffered the limitations imposed on them by those who accepted a patriarchal construction of gender, many refused to be constrained and directed their own life experiences, which varied and changed according to the social, economic, and political conditions of time and place. Their experiences differ because the women were, and are, diverse. They are

women of all races, ethnicities, ages, classes (social and economic), religions, and sexual orientations; and they all have a history.

For teachers of Appalachian history courses who seek to include the history of women in the Mountain South, the diversity of women's experiences makes it difficult to present a singular portrait of women throughout the region. Often, instructors make selections from a variety of good essays or settle on one particular book that examines the role of women, particularly when additional books are required to cover other topics. In the last four decades, scholars have produced, and continue to produce, many fine studies on women in Appalachia, but few provide a broad overview of women across time and place. This book begins to fill that void. Intended as an introduction to the history of women in the Mountain South, *Women of the Mountain South: Identity, Work, and Activism* focuses on three dominant themes over two hundred years of history in various geographic locales. A few essays in this book provide synopses of scholarship essential to the understanding of women in the Mountain South; others provide new insights into the experiences of Appalachian women. The attempt to cover specific topics, eras, and places revealed the scope and limitations of current studies on women's history in the region. The scarcity of primary documents written by mountain women themselves limits understanding of their thoughts and experiences during the frontier and colonial eras.² The legendary exploits of women such as Mad Anne Bailey, Elizabeth Zane, Rebecca Boone, and others often overshadow historical analysis of women on the Appalachian frontier; and while the exploits of men are well documented, very little is known about their wives—for example, John Sevier and his wife, Catherine S. Sevier. Surprisingly, in a region vital to, and still (in numerous ways) obsessed with the Civil War, only a few historians have investigated the wartime roles of mountain women. Unsurprisingly, the industrial era from 1880 to 1920, the focus of numerous studies in Appalachian history, continues to produce the highest number of studies on women in the region. The role of women in the establishment and organization of religious groups demands more investigation. In recent years, several scholars have addressed the role of women in Catholic organizations, but no one has examined the role of religion in mountain women's daily lives.³ Analysis of women's

sexuality and gender identity is also limited. For the most part, studies on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered life in the region have focused on men.⁴ The arrival of minority women in Appalachia, particularly the growing number of Hispanic/Latina and Muslim women, and the maintenance and blending of cultures resulting from the encounter need to be explored. Without a doubt, there is still a lot left for historians to investigate.

A historiography of women in the Mountain South makes it clear that for the most part women remained on the periphery, marginalized by the actions and experiences of the men in their lives. In contrast to the historical narratives written by and about women at the national level, historical works on mountain women written in the antebellum era are almost nonexistent.⁵ Sidney Saylor Farr's *Appalachian Women: An Annotated Bibliography* lists only one, Rufus Anderson's publication of *Memoir of Catherine Brown, A Christian Indian of the Cherokee Nation*, published in 1825.⁶ Between 1850 and 1960, however, the number of books and articles published on mountain women steadily grew. The majority were autobiographies and biographies of well-known or prominent mountain women, from Nancy Ward to Rachel Jackson to early female pioneers in education, medicine, music, or religion; narratives of women captured by Native Americans such as Mary Draper Ingles and Jemima Boone; memoirs and stories of Appalachian mothers, grandmothers, and "aunts"; stories relating the experiences of being a preacher or miner's wife; or tales of a mountain girl who made good against all odds. By far, the women who made it into those history books were white. One of the earliest exceptions to this is African American Anna D. McBain's short essay, "What It Means to Be a Teacher," printed in *Berea Quarterly* in 1901.⁷

Local color writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had an impact on historical work, as many historians tried to place women within the context of the images of Appalachian women created by those writers. Mostly in works of fiction, the writers created lasting stereotypes, portraying the mountain woman either as a young, beautiful, innocent, white girl at the height of her sexuality or as a woman haggard and worn from the domestic duties and childbearing forced on her by a patriarchal society. Yet a third image depicted the woman

who managed to survive a life of toil and hardships as strong and enduring, a woman (often embodied as a “granny woman”) of great wisdom, power, and influence who sustained traditional mountain culture. Historical works tended to promote the latter image (in biographies of mothers and grandmothers) or to document either those who worked to overcome problems in the region (benevolent workers) or those who overcame the problems themselves to become successful.⁸

In the 1960s, the War on Poverty (1964) and the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission (1965) drew the nation’s attention to the region and to the plight of families suffering from high rates of poverty, unemployment, and a lack of health care. The emphasis on women and children led people both inside and outside Appalachia to reexamine the lives of women in the region. The civil rights and women’s movements of the 1960s and 1970s also encouraged women to re-evaluate their lives and roles within the family and within their communities. The women’s movement, along with the movement of “history from the bottom up” that gave rise to the social history movement and the acceptance of women into graduate programs in history departments throughout the region, sparked a new interest in the history of women in Appalachia. Aided by the creation of women’s and Appalachian studies programs in colleges and universities throughout the region and the establishment of the Appalachian Studies Association in 1977 (which encouraged discourse and activism among community women and women in academia), the history of women in the Mountain South began to flourish. Much of the credit goes to Helen Lewis, who recognized the discrimination that women academics faced and played an active role in the development of Appalachian studies.⁹

By the late 1970s, although historians and other scholars still wrote essays on coal miners’ wives, the majority of works on women in the coalfields concentrated on the women who went down in mines themselves. Publications on women written by the staff members of the Coal Employment Project (1977–2000), *Appalachian Heritage*, *Mountain Life and Work*, *Southern Exposure*, and the Council on Appalachian Women’s (CAW) *Magazine of Appalachian Women* (MAW) and *Appalachian Women* focused on women’s work, health, art (particularly in the fields of music and literature), education, religion, and history (memoirs and

interviews with “grannies” continued). These early feminist writers focused almost exclusively on women and the recovery and documentation of women’s roles in history.

Yet many of these works continued to set forth an essentialist perspective of “Appalachian” women that accepted the social and historical construction of a universal female identity in the region. Many feminist scholars, and the feminist movement overall, continued to champion the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century idea that there was such a thing as an “essential nature of woman.” The maternalist care ethics approach of the late twentieth century holds to this essentialist view. Even Sidney Saylor Farr, in the introduction to the first significant compilation of works on Appalachian women in 1981, wrote that “mountain women are warped or shaped by their environment, the mores of their culture, the restrictions of their religious beliefs, and the traditions handed down from mothers and grandmothers” and that they “are very insular.” She concluded that based on the compiled works, mountain women “do have some special powers and special hardships.”¹⁰

During the 1980s, a growing historiography on women in the Mountain South emerged from the research and writing of scholars from all disciplines. David Whisnant’s *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (1983) un-romanticized Appalachian culture and laid the foundation for future studies with his examination of Progressive Era reformers—missionaries, nurses, and teachers—the so-called fotted-on women from outside Appalachia whose biased but “well-meaning” efforts to preserve or modernize mountain culture threatened the culture itself. Challenging and rejecting the romanticized and stereotyped interpretations of women in the Mountain South, scholars began to use postmodern feminist theories to challenge the universalist and essentialist writings on Appalachians and Appalachia.¹¹ Scholars used gender analysis, how societies construct and teach masculinity and femininity, to examine the impact of gender on individual and institutional structures of power and its social, economic, and political impact on women. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall’s “Disorderly Women: Gender and Labor Militancy in the Appalachian South” (1986), a complex study of striking female textile workers in Elizabethton, Tennessee, and Sally Ward Maggard’s “Class and Gender: New Theoretical Priorities

in Appalachian Studies” (1986) introduced feminist approaches to Appalachian studies.¹² Since then, feminist theory has played a prominent role in the study of mountain women.

In their essay “Appalachian Studies, Resistance, and Postmodernism” in *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change* (1993), Alan Banks, Dwight Billings, and Karen Tice maintain that the field of feminist studies promotes the use of a “deconstructive strategy” to disassemble the myths and stereotypes of Appalachian women and to examine the diversity and plurality of women’s experiences in the Mountain South. The resulting conclusion is that women in the Mountain South have multiple identities that do not stem from geography or culture but from political dynamics and social change.¹³ Maggard’s feminist criticism of Appalachian historiography continued with the essay “Will the Real Daisy Mae Please Stand Up? A Methodological Essay on Gender Analysis in Appalachian Research” (1994), followed by essays on gender and education (1995) and gender, class, and labor (1998, 1999).¹⁴ While many of the feminist studies on Appalachian women came from women’s studies scholars, others used the same methodology in their works. Geographer Ann Oberhauser applied gender to her analysis of women, work, and geography (1995), and historian Sandra Barney examined the role of gender in the construction of Appalachian “otherness” (1996, 1999). Two seminal works on women in the region come from historian Theda Perdue, who examined the cultural persistence of Cherokee women in *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change, 1700–1835*, and sociologist Wilma A. Dunaway, who examined the impact of race and class on women’s work in the Mountain South in both *The African American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* and *Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South*.¹⁵

In 1999 Patricia Beaver edited a collection of essays for a special issue of the *National Women’s Studies Association Journal* titled “Appalachia and the South: Place, Gender, and Pedagogy.”¹⁶ Among those essays, perhaps the most used are Beaver’s “Women in Appalachia and the South: Gender, Race, Region, and Agency” and Barbara Ellen Smith’s “‘Beyond the Mountains’: The Paradox of Women’s Place in Appalachian History.” That same year, Smith published an edited volume, *Neither Separate nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South*,

containing seven essays that examine the political economy of women in Appalachia.¹⁷ In “Beyond the Mountains,” Smith argues that anyone writing the history of women in Appalachia should consider the “implicitly gendered constructions of Appalachia,” in which men play the dominant role, and challenges writers to look at the ways in which women have made and shaped history and contested traditional constructions, thereby creating a new feminist historiography that “challenges conventional conceptions of the region, its history, and who has created both.”¹⁸

Sandra Barney’s groundbreaking work, *Authorized to Heal: Gender, Class, and the Transformation of Medicine in Appalachia, 1880–1920* (2000), followed by Melanie Beals Goans’s *Mary Breckinridge: The Frontier Nursing Service and Rural Health in Appalachia* (2008), addresses the politics of gender and class that occurred during the transformation of health care in the mountains.¹⁹ Both works reveal the historical role of women in the professionalization of health care in Appalachia and the appropriation of that history by men.

Mary K. Anglin’s “Toward a Workable Past: Dangerous Memories and Feminist Perspectives” (2000) and Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt’s essay “Creating Appalachian Women’s Studies: Dancing Away from Granny and Elly May” (2005) both argue the benefits of a feminist approach.²⁰ Engelhardt argues that feminism and Appalachian studies have much to offer each other. Feminism, according to Engelhardt, “can help Appalachian studies get beyond the questioning of stereotypes” to investigate the historical, cultural, and material causes of stereotypes” and to make and analyze connections between individuals and institutions, while Appalachian “tools of class analysis could help feminism move on to resolving its class struggles.”²¹ Engelhardt’s work has resulted in two books on women and feminism in the Mountain South, *The Tangled Roots of Feminism, Environmentalism, and Appalachian Literature* (2003) and *Beyond Hill and Hollow: Original Readings in Appalachian Women’s Studies* (2005).

The goal of feminist history, defined as historical work infused with concern about the past and present oppression of women, is to reread the work of female writers and artists to demonstrate the significance of women’s voices and choices in the past. A feminist approach to studies

of mountain women encouraged an even more inclusive analysis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, place, and sexuality in Appalachian studies, a field dominated by the study of the class struggles of men.

Lately, Appalachian studies scholars have sought to place women's history in a global perspective. Scholars such as Barbara Ellen Smith, Stephen L. Fisher, Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, and Mary K. Anglin are at the forefront of this movement in Appalachia, challenging regional scholars to look beyond the Appalachian region and old concepts of Appalachian exceptionalism to examine the common concerns of women throughout the world, particularly those living in mountain regions.²² How do mountain women around the world contest economic injustice, established power structures, and environmental degradation? What can Appalachian activists teach them? And what can they teach us?²³

In 2010 *Appalachian Journal* printed a special issue titled "Women in Appalachia." The issue contains the work of some of the most prolific historians of women in the Mountain South, including Barbara J. Howe, Deborah L. Blackwell, and Penny Messinger, all of whom also contributed to this collection of essays. Other recent works include Erica Abrams Locklear's *Negotiating a Perilous Empowerment: Appalachian Women's Literacies* (2011); Helen M. Lewis, Patricia D. Beaver, and Judith Jennings's *Helen Matthews Lewis: Living Social Justice in Appalachia* (2012); and Joyce M. Barry's *Standing Our Ground: Women, Environmental Justice, and the Fight to End Mountaintop Removal* (2012).²⁴ Researchers of all disciplines increasingly document the complexity and diversity of women and place.

So what does the concept of place mean for the historical analysis of women living in the region? And what does it mean for the future of Appalachian studies? Is Appalachia a distinct place or not? "Place," or a sense of place, can suggest a sense of belonging—and, thereby, exclusiveness and a separation from those who do *not* belong. "Place" can be prescriptive, if it creates parameters whereby only certain ideas or qualities and characteristics of people linked to place are acceptable (a form of essentialism). And, in Appalachian studies, focus on place often leads to analysis from the perspective of the outworn binary of "outsider/insider." Admittedly, "place" is central to Appalachian studies in

many respects. Events unfold “in place” and are linked from local place to the larger “region.” Place also is evocative, especially of emotional attachment (and often found in literary works); but emotional assertions of “place” cannot substitute for the historical analysis of people, poverty, events, or power relations in a local place, or in their linkage to region and nation.

Although students, scholars, and activists who study the region still have a lot to learn, the essays in this book provide different perspectives of the diversity of mountain women and their experiences throughout the region. Focusing on the three dominant themes of mountain women’s history, identity, work, and activism, the essays illustrate the ways in which women have shaped, and have been shaped by, the social, economic, and political history of Appalachia.

Part 1 of *Women in the Mountain South* explores identity, that is, how women interpreted and perceived their lives in social, economic, and political terms, as well as how others perceived them, and how those perceptions changed over time and place. While essentialist writings depicted a universal “Appalachian” identity, recent scholarship recognizes the plurality and complexity of Appalachian identity. Phillip Obermiller and Michael E. Maloney in “The Uses and Misuses of Appalachian Culture” argue against the indiscriminate use of culture based on generalized and stereotypical cultural traits and claim that no single “mountain culture” applies to twenty-five million people in thirteen states. They argue that while there may be numerous local cultures based on “belief and behavior sets tied to specific places,” it may be better to substitute the concept of culture for that of Appalachian identity.²⁵

The social constructions of race, ethnicity, and gender, social and political institutions, the perceptions of benevolent workers, local color writers, scholars, the media, and mountain women themselves have shaped and altered the images and identities of Appalachian women. In the first essay on identity, “Women in Cherokee Society: Status, Race, and Power from the Colonial Period to Removal,” Marie Tedesco examines the place of native, white, African, African American, and mixed raced women in evolving Cherokee society. The power to determine Cherokee identity, based on clan affiliation through a Cherokee mother, belonged to Cherokee women. Cultural borrowing and diffusion led to

major changes in the Cherokee nation and weakened its matrilineal base of society. Yet the persistence of Cherokee identity, and its link to race and to white concepts of race gender, continually marginalized black Cherokee women and created a race prejudice that still exists today.

In “Mothers’ Day v. Mother’s Day: The Jarvis Women and the Meaning of Motherhood,” Katharine Lane Antolini illustrates the fact that motherhood has many meanings, depending on class, race, place (urban or rural), and, particularly, time. As gender ideals shifted, the *mothers’ day* that Ann Reeves Jarvis created in the 1850s had a far different meaning than the one her daughter, Anna Jarvis, conceived at the turn of the twentieth century. While Ann Reeves Jarvis’s “mothers’ day” emerged from rural efforts for health reform and the war-torn counties of a divided state during the Civil War, it was “Mother’s Day,” a day to honor an individual’s parent, that became a national holiday. In the process, the identity of “mothers’ day,” rooted in service by and for mothers and communities in need, was altered. Yet while the region maintains its claim on the idealized version of “mothers’ day,” Ann Reeves Jarvis’s original definition of motherhood created a lasting maternal model for social organizing.

The gendered nature of stereotypes and the centrality of those gendered and feminized images to the concept of Appalachia are the focus of Deborah L. Blackwell’s essay “Female Stereotypes and the Creation of Appalachia, 1870–1940.” Blackwell investigates the role of women (from both inside and outside Appalachia) and institutions in the creation and perpetuation of the stereotypes. While mountain women sometimes used the images as a means of social, economic, or political agency, benevolent workers used them to obtain charitable aid and industry used them to excuse their exploitation of the land and its people.

In “Women on a Mission: Southern Appalachia’s ‘Benevolent Workers’ on Film,” John C. Inscoe analyzes the media’s portrayal of female benevolent workers in the films *I’d Climb the Highest Mountain*, *Christy*, and *Songcatcher*. Over time, Hollywood presented an increasingly feminist portrayal of the workers. More important, the movies illustrate how people inside and outside Appalachia have perceived each other across cultural boundaries, thereby highlighting the issue of “cultural otherness.”

In the last essay on identity in part 1, Karen W. Tice reveals the ways women's bodies and images are sites of representation, assimilation, belonging, and racial and cultural identity in the Mountain South in "Embodying Appalachia: Progress, Pride, and Beauty Pageantry, 1930s to the Present." Tice examines the gendered, racialized, and class-based nature of beauty pageants and the personal and political agendas behind them. She demonstrates that the pageants promoted a sense of place, promoted and protected white femininity, and in the case of black pageants, reinforced class and color hierarchies. At the same time, contestants represented the commercial and political interests of the region, particularly those of railroads, oil, coal, and gas.

Primary documents included in the section enhance understanding of women and identity in the Mountain South. In the "Moravian *Lebenslauf* (Memoir or Life's Journey)," Moravians, Cherokee, and blacks, although united in their love of God, maintain racial distinctions. "Petition for Divorce" reveals how marriage and divorce had the ability to shape a woman's social, political, and economic identity in the early nineteenth century. Edgar Tuft's perception of mountain women illustrates the making of female stereotypes and "identity" and how they became a basis for reform efforts in the Mountain South in the document "Women of the Mountains." "Rebel in the Mosque: Going Where I Know I Belong" and "An Undocumented Mexican Mother of a High School Dropout in East Tennessee" reveal the difficulties of recent immigrants, Muslim and Hispanic, to socially and economically integrate into local communities while maintaining their ethnic and cultural identity. In combination, the essays and documents in this section reframe what it means to be "Appalachian." Although the population in the Mountain South has been culturally and genetically blended throughout its history, racism persists in the mountains, and the region continues to maintain an image of cultural whiteness.

The nature and diversity of women's work is the topic of part 2. Based on race, ethnicity, and class, variations in the labor experiences of women in the Mountain South existed both inside and outside the domestic environment of home. Women's work consisted of both paid and unpaid labor, public and domestic work, and what anthropologist

Carol Stack refers to as “kin work,” the responsibility of caring for the sick, the elderly, and the young.²⁶

The first essay in this section, Wilma A. Dunaway’s “Challenging the Myth of Separate Spheres: Women’s Work in the Antebellum Mountain South,” argues that the concept of separate spheres cannot be applied to Appalachia. Instead, gender lines blurred, with mountain women performing tasks that outside the mountains were seen as “unsuitable” for women. Regardless of the legal and cultural standards that kept many women from working outside of the home, women’s labor contributed to the family economy and survival. Dunaway maintains that women’s work came in many forms and was shaped by race, class, and gender, all of which had economic value regardless of being paid or unpaid work.

“Cyprians and Courtesans, Murder and Mayhem: Prostitution in Wheeling during the Civil War,” written by Barbara J. Howe, does much to dispel the stereotypical images of Appalachian women. Her study reveals a hierarchal profession based on class, race, and ethnicity. Contrary to the dominant image of Appalachians as rural folk, female prostitutes were predominantly urbanites. Lacking both power and agency, many of these women entered prostitution as a consequence of economic distress, alcoholism, abuse, or homelessness.

In contrast, Penny Messenger examines the central role of middle-class white women from outside the region in the movements to reform Appalachia in “Professionalizing ‘Mountain Work’ in Appalachia: Women in the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers.” Through the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers, these reformers asserted their authority to define both the region and its needs and created and institutionalized their vision of Appalachia as a recognizable geographic and social region. The female leadership of the CSMW carried out a rural and feminized Progressive agenda in the mountains that contributed to the development of social work as a profession.

In ““Two fer” the Money? African American Women in the Appalachian Coalfields,” Carletta A. Bush examines the gendered and racialized myth surrounding black women’s employment in the coal industry in the 1970s. The “two fer” myth alleged that black women had an employment advantage over men and white women because the coal industry could, under affirmative action guidelines, claim the

employment of two minorities by hiring one black woman and that, subsequently, the successful entrance of these minorities into the work force would lead them to take jobs from white men. Those few who were hired faced discrimination that limited their advancement and made them among the first to be fired when the coal industry began to decline. In the end, the myth served to preserve white male privilege in the mining industry, while dividing women miners and eliminating the power they could gain through unity.

The sex typing of jobs and sexism among union workers in the steel industry is the focus of Louis C. Martin's "Flopping Tin and Punching Metal: A Survey of Women Steelworkers in West Virginia, 1890–1970." Martin shows that despite numerous changes in the steel industry over decades, a gendered division of labor in the steel industry remained in place, making the women's experiences "surprisingly consistent" over the next eighty years. Working conditions for women did not improve until legal challenges against discrimination occurred in the 1970s.

The documents in part 2 highlight the impact of class and gender on women's work. "The Indenture of Mary Hollens" reveals how women without means were often forced to survive in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. "The Testimony of Mrs. Maggie Waters" illustrates the lack of jobs available for women living in the coal mining regions of Appalachia, forcing women to take in boarders or do laundry to supplement the family income. The Summer School for Women Workers in Industry held in Arden, North Carolina, in 1930, attempted to educate women on labor economics, union activism, and public health. In "A Working Woman Speaks," Bessie Edens of Hampton, Tennessee, describes the conditions women faced in the artificial silk (rayon) industry, efforts to organize, and need for married women to work. Efforts of mountain women to obtain decent wages and better working conditions are also the focus of "The Pikeville Methodist Hospital Strike" and "Poetry from the *Coal Mining Women's Support Team News*." The documents reveal women's impetus for participating in the workforce, their continual attempts to improve working conditions, and the methods they employed to achieve their goals.

The dominant role of women activists in Appalachia is the topic of part 3. Community activism on all levels has shaped the construction

and reconstruction of Appalachian identity and continues to do so today. Like the other topics in this book, gender, race, and class have influenced the focus and methods of activism in the region. Women's petitions for freedom, for divorce, and for recognition of their legal right to inherit, antislavery petitions, and more helped mountain women to make strides toward obtaining their own rights and, in the process, transform their political identity. Efforts to organize churches, schools, and communities and to protect their families and communities through sanitation and health reforms created good communities in which to live. Mountain women have fought for better social and economic conditions and for justice. They have fought for protection and survival of their husbands, families, and neighbors in coal communities throughout Appalachia. They have fought for the preservation of the environment and the land. And they have fought for and against each other. Geography, moral values, cultural traditions, religious beliefs, political ideology, race, ethnicity, and class often have divided mountain women on issues such as abolition, politics, suffrage, abortion, and gay rights. Regardless of their stance on issues, mountain women have found a variety of ways to express their opinions, make changes, or promote their causes.

H. Adam Ackley's "In the Footsteps of Mother Jones, Mothers of the Miners: Florence Reece, Molly Jackson, and Sarah Ogun Gunning" analyzes the maternal model of Appalachian community organizing based on the lives of some of Appalachia's best-known and best-loved women activists. All of these women expanded the traditional Appalachian definitions of maternal authority and women's work and brought national attention to the poor working conditions found in the timber and coal mining regions of the Mountain South.

Motherhood and sexuality are the focus of Evelyn Ashley Sorrell's essay "She Now Cries Out': Linda Neville and the Limitations of Venereal Disease Control Policies in Kentucky." Sorrell found that when Progressive Era reformers attempted to eliminate blindness in infants due to venereal disease, specifically gonorrhea and syphilis, mountain women were deemed responsible for spreading the disease. The solution, therefore, was to control women's, rather than men's, sexuality.

"Garrison, Drewry, Meadows, and Bateman: Race, Class, and Activism in the Mountain State" examines the lives of four middle-class

black women who fight to ease conditions in the black community and initiate social and political change in the fields of politics, social work, education, and health care. Author Lois Lucas demonstrates how, working both inside and outside the confinements of race and gender, these women drew on their education and the skills they learned in the black clubwomen's associations and fraternal auxiliaries to provide racial uplift in the age of Jim Crow. Jan Voogd also looks at race in Appalachia and discusses one of the earliest examples of the civil rights movement's legal challenges to segregation in transportation in "*Ethel New v. Atlantic Greyhound: Fighting for Social Justice in Appalachia*." Three months pregnant and tired from standing up for 80 miles of a 350-mile bus trip in western Virginia, Ethel New defied institutionalized segregation, regional mores, and cultural expectations when she refused to move from a seat on a segregated bus. In doing so, she not only defined herself but found the means and power to challenge segregation in a court of law.

In the last essay in this section, "Remembering the Past, Working for the Future': West Virginia Women Fight for Environmental Heritage and Economic Justice in the Age of Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining," Joyce M. Barry analyzes the role of West Virginia women in the fight against mountaintop removal coal mining. Barry argues that despite the historic link between women's activism and male resistance in the coalfields of West Virginia, women have created their own path in the fight against mountaintop removal. In this fight, women operate outside the coal industry and against the interests of male labor in an effort to protect their families, their communities, and the environment.

The essays and documents in part 3 document the maternal nature of women's activism in the Mountain South. Using their maternal role as protectors of their families, their communities, the environment, and the land, women fought both for and against numerous causes. In "The Petition of Margaret Lee," Lee fights to obtain freedom for both herself and her children. Women extended their maternal duties to address issues such as temperance or suffrage, as seen in the documents included in "The Fight for Suffrage." Women's bodies and sexuality, and the control of both, have always been, and continue to be, contentious issues as seen in the documents included in both "Abortion in the Mountain South" and "Helen Louise Gibson Compton: Founder and Proprietor

of The Shamrock.” Limited access to health care in rural areas of the Mountain South and rising cancer rates in the region have increased the importance of family in health care issues as seen in “At the Intersection of Cancer Survivorship, Gender, Family, and Place in Southern Central Appalachia: A Case Study.” Health concerns also play a vital role in activists’ continuing interest in the environment.

The essays and documents in part 3 reflect issues that were, or continue to be, controversial throughout the region. For the most part, the examples of activism in this section of the book illustrate only one side of the issues discussed. Women of the Mountain South fought, and continue to fight, on both sides of the issues. In this regard, place has little impact, for women in the same “places” of the Mountain South often chose, and continue to choose, opposing sides. Women were antisuffragists as well as suffragists; union and anti-union; civil rights workers and racists. Issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and immigration continue to divide women in the region, just as these issues divide women throughout America. Perhaps nothing has divided women of the Mountain South more than the issue of mountaintop removal—perhaps because it strikes at the heart of “Appalachian” maternalism. Mountaintop removal forces mountain women to choose between jobs and environment; between feeding and clothing families today and their health tomorrow; between preserving the past and the desire for a better future.

In the epilogue, contributors to this volume discuss the concept of place as it applies to the Mountain South and to their work. Diverse and pluralistic, the *real* Appalachia consists of many places, where people of different social classes, religions, races, ethnicity, and sexual orientation live while maintaining a variety of traditions and interests. Yet there remains an elusive and intangible element to the place or “places” of the Mountain South that continues to make the region “distinct,” one that appeals to the heart of all of those who call it home.

NOTES

1. Allen W. Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), 199–200.
2. Major exceptions include works on Cherokee women, particularly Theda Perdue’s *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change, 1700–1835* (Lincoln:

University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Tiya Miles's *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Wilma A. Dunaway's pioneering *Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). These are works that illustrate the existence of, even if difficult to find, primary documents on women in the Mountain South.

3. See Helen M. Lewis and Monica Apple, *Mountain Sisters: From Convent to Community in Appalachia* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004); Barbara J. Howe, "Pioneers on a Mission for God: The Order of Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Wheeling, 1848–1860," *West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional History*, n.s., 4, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 59–92; and Barbara J. Howe, "Expansion Despite 'National Difficulties': The Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Wheeling, 1861–1870," *West Virginia History: A Journal of Regional History*, n.s., 5, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 59–101; also see Carolyn Knight, Sarah Poteete, Amy Sparrow, and Jessica C. Wrye, interviewers, "From the Ground Up: The Community-Building of Marie Cirillo," *Appalachian Journal* 30, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 30–56.

4. See Kate Black and Marc A. Rhorer, "Out in the Mountains: Exploring Lesbian and Gay Lives," *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 18–28; and Jeff Mann, *Loving Mountains, Loving Men* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

5. There are numerous historical accounts of women's history outside of the region from women: Mary Rowlandson's autobiography of her capture by Native Americans in 1676; Boston native Sarah Kemble Knight's and Elizabeth House Trist's travel narratives; Elizabeth Ashbridge's story of her rise from an indentured servant to a Quaker preacher; Phoebe Palmer's *The Way of Holiness* (1843); and Margaret Fuller's history *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). There is an even bigger gap in the historical narrative of black women in Appalachia compared to black women's narratives on the national level. Nationally, Jarena Lee's *Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee* appeared in 1836; publication of Zilpha Elaw's *Memoirs of the Life, Religious Experience, and Ministerial Travels and Labors of Mrs. Zilpha Elaw, An American Female of Color* occurred in 1845; and Julia A. J. Footé's *A Brand Plucked from the Fire* followed in 1879.

6. Sidney Saylor Farr, *Appalachian Women: An Annotated Bibliography* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981), 34.

7. Anna D. McBain, "What It Means to Be a Teacher," *Berea Quarterly* (May 1901): 19–21, listed in Farr, *Appalachian Women*, 15.

8. See for example, Col. John H. Dillard's "The Story of Rowena Roberts," *Mountain Life and Work* 4, no. 1 (April 1928): 19–20, 31. Success usually meant getting an education and moving out of the mountains.

9. Jessica Wilkerson, Jessica Cline, and David P. Cline, "Mountain Feminist: Helen Matthews Lewis, Appalachian Studies, and the Long Women's Movement," *Southern Cultures* 17, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 48–65.

10. Farr, *Appalachian Women*, 4.

11. Alan Banks, Dwight Billings, and Karen Tice, "Appalachian Studies, Resistance, and Postmodernism," in *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of*

Resistance and Change, ed. Stephen L. Fisher (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 292.

12. See Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's "Disorderly Women: Gender and Labor Militancy in the Appalachian South," *Journal of American History* 73, no. 2 (September 1986): 354–82; Sally Ward Maggard's "Class and Gender: New Theoretical Priorities in Appalachian Studies," in *The Impact of Institutions in Appalachia: Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Appalachian Studies Conference*, ed. Jim Lloyd and Anne G. Campbell (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1986), 100–113; and Banks, Billings, and Tice, "Appalachian Studies, Resistance, and Postmodernism," 283–302.

13. Banks, Billings, and Tice, "Appalachian Studies, Resistance, and Postmodernism," 292.

14. Sally Ward Maggard, "Will the Real Daisy Mae Please Stand Up? A Methodological Essay on Gender Analysis in Appalachian Research," *Appalachian Journal* 21, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 136–50; Sally Ward Maggard, "Gender and Schooling in Appalachia: Lessons for an Era of Economic Restructuring," *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association* 7 (1995): 140–51; Sally Ward Maggard, "We're Fighting Millionaires!': The Clash of Gender and Class in Appalachian Women's Union Organizing," in *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest*, ed. Kathleen Blee (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 289–306; Sally Ward Maggard, "Gender, Race, and Place: Confounding Labor Activism in Central Appalachia," in *Neither Separate nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South*, ed. Barbara Ellen Smith (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 185–206; and Barbara Ellen Smith, "Walk-Ons in the Third Act: The Role of Women in Appalachian Historiography," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 5–28

15. See Ann Oberhauser, "Towards a Gendered Regional Geography: Women and Work in Rural Appalachia," *Growth and Change* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 217–44; Sandra Lee Barney, "Bringing Modern Medicine to the Mountains: Scientific Medicine and the Transformation of Health Care in Southern West Virginia, 1880–1910," *West Virginia History* 55 (1996): 110–26, and "Maternalism and the Promotion of Scientific Medicine during the Industrial Transformation of Appalachia, 1880–1930," *NWSA Journal: A Publication of the National Women's Studies Association* 11 (Fall 1999): 68–92; Perdue, *Cherokee Women*; and Wilma A. Dunaway, *The African American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and *Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Also see Thomas Hatley, "Cherokee Women Hold Their Ground," in *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era*, ed. Robert D. Mitchell (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 37–51; Tiya Miles, "The Narrative of Nancy, A Cherokee Woman," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 29, nos. 2 and 3 (2008): 59–80; and Tiya Miles, "'Circular Reasoning': Recentering Cherokee Women in the Antiremoval Campaigns," *American Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (June 2009): 221–43.

16. Patricia Beaver, ed., "Appalachia and the South: Place, Gender, and Pedagogy," *NWSA Journal: A Publication of the National Women's Studies Association* 11, no. 3 (Fall 1999).

17. See Barbara Ellen Smith's "Beyond the Mountains': The Paradox of Women's Place in Appalachian History," *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 11, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 1-17; Smith, *Neither Separate nor Equal*.

18. Smith, "Beyond the Mountains."

19. See Sandra Barney, *Authorized to Heal: Gender, Class, and the Transformation of Medicine in Appalachia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Melanie Beals Goans, *Mary Breckinridge: The Frontier Nursing Service and Rural Healthcare in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

20. See Mary K. Anglin, "Toward a Workable Past: Dangerous Memories and Feminist Perspectives," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 6, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring, Fall 2000): 71-99; and Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, "Creating Appalachian Women's Studies: Dancing Away from Granny and Elly May," in *Beyond Hill and Hollow: Original Readings in Appalachian Women's Studies*, ed. Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

21. Engelhardt, "Creating Appalachian Women's Studies," 11.

22. See Stephen L. Fisher and Barbara Ellen Smith, eds., *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Engelhardt, "Creating Appalachian Women's Studies," 7-8; and Mary K. Anglin, "Moving Forward: Gender and Globalization in/of Appalachian Studies," *Appalachian Journal* 37, nos. 3-4 (Spring/Summer 2010): 286-94.

23. Fisher and Smith, *Transforming Places*, 325.

24. See Bruce E. Stewart, "An Appalachian Odyssey: An Interview with Patricia Beaver," *Appalachian Studies Journal* 37, nos. 3-4 (Spring/Summer) 2010: 164-82; Erica Abrams Locklear, *Negotiating a Perilous Empowerment: Appalachian Women's Literacies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011); Helen M. Lewis, Patricia D. Beaver, and Judith Jennings, *Helen Matthews Lewis: Living Social Justice in Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012); and Joyce M. Barry, *Standing Our Ground: Women, Environmental Justice, and the Fight to End Mountaintop Removal* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

25. Phillip J. Obermiller and Michael E. Maloney, "The Uses and Misuses of Appalachian Culture," Urban Appalachian Council Working Paper No. 20, May 2011. Available at <http://uacvoice.org/pdf/workingpaper20.pdf> (accessed June 1, 2012), 11. This study focuses on concepts of culture and identity in relation to urban Appalachians.

26. Stewart, "Appalachian Odyssey," 177. Patricia Beaver attributes the concept of "kin work" to anthropologist Carol Stack.