

# The Trials of Edith Maxwell.



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## Book Review, Sharon Hatfield, Never Seen 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 Edith Maxwell, accused of murdering her coal-miner father in depression-era West Virginia. Hatfield's detective work brings together the threads of this story to provide a series of headlines and trial transcripts from real life. There are surprises to be had as Hatfield tells the legal tale of the young and vibrant Edith battling her way through the trials and appeals as two juries of twelve men sentenced her to a lifetime in prison. *Never Seen the Moon* seeks to transform Edith's trials into a social commentary on Appalachia, yellow journalism, and the legal profession.

Hatfield's book offers an interesting foray into the newspapers of the early 20th century, but it also raises difficult questions of battered women's self-defense and media involvement in legal proceedings that continue to plague the legal profession today. However, the review does disappoint in its claim to analyze the gender issues of this era. The book's strategic failure to focus her criminal appeals on the jury question is a missed opportunity to explore what impact a "jury of her peers" might have had for Edith.

## Publication Title

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