

7-2001

## Review: All We Knew Was To Farm: Rural Women in the Upcountry South, 1919-1941

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### Recommended Citation

Hall, Cline Edwin, "Review: All We Knew Was To Farm: Rural Women in the Upcountry South, 1919-1941" (2001). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 10.  
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weaponry to exist in the field. That said, this book suffers a critical flaw. Bartholomees confines his research to the *Official Records* and the standard printed personal recollections of men such as Porter Alexander and Walter Taylor. To his credit, Bartholomees addresses the limited scope of his research in the preface. The admission is striking, and it highlights the fact that he really touches upon a relatively small number of the different staffs and staff officers in Lee's army. It also explains, no doubt, the limited number of comparisons with staffs across the Confederacy and—for that matter—the Union. For this restrictive research methodology alone, the definitive work on the staff of the Army of Northern Virginia remains to be written.

The Citadel

Kyle S. Sinisi

*All We Knew Was To Farm: Rural Women in the Upcountry South, 1919-1941.* By Melissa Walker. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xvii, 341. \$42.50, cloth.)

One area of neglect in our understanding of the Southern Appalachian region has been our lack of knowledge about the transformation of race and gender relations as it applies particularly to farm women. Certainly, this work by Melissa Walker, professor at Converse College, remedies this.

Professor Walker uses three regions in what she prefers to call "upcountry South" rather than the Appalachian south to accomplish this purpose. Those areas include the Tennessee countries east of the Cumberland Mountains, nine counties in southwestern West Virginia and seven counties in northwestern South Carolina. What ties these areas together for this study is that they all possess rural southern cultural patterns and they share southern segregation patterns and racial attitudes along with the poverty of this region. One wonders, however, why contiguous territories such as southwest Virginia, western North Carolina or even North Georgia are not included in this study. They also fit Professor Walker's definition but no explanation is given as to why they are not included.

The theme of the study is to show how the status of farm women changes from 1919-1941 in a period of economic crisis. Changing from a region of subsistence farming to one of commercial farming and interference by government action during the depression and New Deal years, women learned to cope. Even though "all we knew was to farm" was their way of expressing their role in helping to earn a living, that role changes by the 1930s.

At the beginning of the period rural women participated in farm decisions with their husbands. Some did fieldwork and certainly were in

charge of raising the family food and preserving it. Their status, even though somewhat limited by gender roles, was enhanced in the community by their involvement in mutual aid networks. Their participation in Home Extension Work and Home Demonstration Clubs, while somewhat limited, provided somewhat of a social outlet and training for years to come. What provided them status was their semi-independence of being able to bring in some money though the sale of farm products or occasionally income from an off-farm job.

As the region changed from subsistence farming to commercial farming, as industrialization increased, and as the government became more involved in their lives through New Deal policies, the status of rural women was marginalized and, for the most part in a increasingly cash-based society, social relationships changed. Women became more dependent on the instability of an income from a wage-earning husband. Farm work became less important, even though women still attempted to contribute income by selling eggs, butter, and other farm products. Though there were more opportunities in official positions in the community, Professor Walker believes their roles were less central. Mutual aid networks were thereafter controlled by outside agencies, such as the Farm Bureau. Professor Walker also relates the differences between the roles and status of white middle-class farm women and that of tenant farm women with African-American women.

Professor Walker provides excellent descriptions of how TVA, the formation of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, and the building of the military installation at Camp Croft in South Carolina had an impact on women and their changing status. In separate chapters on the building of the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) in Blount County, Tennessee and the commercialization of the coal mining industry in southwestern West Virginia, she also demonstrates how industrialization influenced changes in women's status. In other areas, increasing dairy farming in Loudon County, Tennessee and peach farming in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, changed farm life. All of these caused a transformation in gender roles and shifted definitions of class status and race relations.

This work is a part of the "Revisiting Rural American" series of Johns Hopkins University Press. It is well documented from archival sources and government records; however, Professor Walker depends much on oral history that brings in human interest stories. I have lived in two of the three areas that she covers and I can attest that her descriptions of rural ways and beliefs are true to form. This book is a good supplement to an old standard about tenant farm women by Margaret Hagood, *Mothers of the South*.