

The Hatfields and the McCoys: America's Feud, as Portrayed in the New York, West
Virginia, and Kentucky Press, 1888-1890

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This thesis titled
The Hatfields and the McCoys: America's Feud, As Portrayed in the New York, West
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Abstract

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The Hatfields and the McCoy's: America's Feud, as Portrayed in the New York, West Virginia, and Kentucky Press, 1888-1890

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This thesis examines the impact of the press during the Hatfield and McCoy feud of 1882-1890. This study was inspired by a History Channel program about the infamous feud, which discussed how the coverage of the feud may have influenced yellow journalism and Appalachian stereotypes.

The Hatfield-McCoy feud was a bloody border war that occurred along the Tug River Valley, which separated Kentucky and West Virginia. By examining how the press covered the feud in newspapers and the era's dime novels this thesis argues that sensational journalism was occurring as early as 1888—instead of the generally accepted date of 1895. While it cannot be said that the Hatfield-McCoy feud was what started sensational journalism, it is interesting to note that early examples of it were occurring during the feud. This thesis also argues that the feud may have greatly influenced the common Appalachian stereotypes of today through the use of media priming. By showering their stories with reports of wild mountain men and stern-faced Appalachian women, the reporters of the era may have contributed strongly to the stereotyping of an entire group of people.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wonderful parents Jill and Tony Bonfig. Thank you for your unconditional love and support, I would not be where I am today without you!

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Chapter 1: The History of the Feud

Introduction

The Hatfield-McCoy Feud is one of the most famous conflicts in American history. Films have been made about it, legends born from it, and an entire subsection of America defined by it. Historians have long grappled over what actually occurred in those contentious years of 1882-1890. Was this in fact one of the bloodiest family feuds in American history, or simply a few isolated incidents of normal neighborly conflict that were inflated and distorted by the media? Or something else?

The so-called Hatfield-McCoy feud occurred between two extended families along the Tug River Valley that divides Kentucky and West Virginia. According to many feud historians, the spark that started the feud was the slaying of Devil Anse Hatfield's younger brother, Ellison, in 1882 at the annual Election Day celebrations, held in the mountain town of Blackberry Creek, Kentucky.¹

Soon after the death of Ellison Hatfield the true fighting began, and the feud became a media circus. Newspaper reporters from New York City, the largest and most competitive newspaper market in the United States, came into the foothills of the Appalachian mountains, which in those days seemed like the wilderness. As reporters spun sensationalized tales of uncivilized mountain men with long hatchets and coonskin hats, the people of the Appalachian mountains began to seem like savage hillbillies, whose chief concerns were fighting, making moonshine, and polishing their Winchester rifles. But while these New York reporters were writing their tales, as this thesis will show, many of them had never set foot in the Appalachian region and just wrote what they thought would sell the most papers and make the most money. This thesis will detail

how the images they presented of these mountain people were often inaccurate representations. In a February 1888 edition of *The New York World*, for example, the Appalachian region was described as a “primitive community, where school children are taught to use their Winchester rifles with unerring accuracy and every woman wears a pistol in her belt.”² The well-known reporter T.C. Crawford went into Hatfield territory in 1889 to write newspaper stories for the *New York World*, which would eventually turn into his book, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States*.³ An image of the book’s original cover can be found in Appendix A. Crawford was one of the *New York World*’s top reporters, and had spent time in Washington and London as a special correspondent.⁴ The October 1890 edition of *Current Literature* stated that at that time Crawford “was one of the few well-to-do newspaper correspondents in the world.”⁵

Crawford claimed that his account of the feud was an accurate one, but it was sensationalized and further reinforced the picture of what people at that time saw as “the typical Appalachian.” He called the Tug River Valley “Murderland” and described Devil Anse’s son William “Cap” Hatfield as “simply a bad young man, without a single redeeming point.”⁶

In more recent years, members of the Hatfield family as well as local historians have begun to emerge from the shadows and defend the Hatfield family against the unfair images that had been written of them. Ron Eller, the director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky, said that the events of the feud had been exaggerated through sensationalistic newspaper articles, cartoons, and dime novels. “They’d been really berated and degraded in the press as being wild, backward hillbillies,”⁷ Eller wrote. Jo Creason, a reporter for the *Louisville Courier Journal*, said in a 1952 article, “Little

effort has ever been made to show either the Hatfields or the McCoys as they actually were, and are—a sturdy, self-reliant breed of family-loving men, stubbornly independent and loyal.”⁸

This study of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, which lasted from 1882 to 1890, will focus mainly on how two groups covered the infamous conflict: New York newspapers and the West Virginia newspapers. The dates for observation are January 8 1888, to September 12, 1890, because that was when coverage of the feud was at its height, according to the author’s research of that era’s newspapers. Nine articles from four major New York City newspapers, fourteen newspaper articles found at the West Virginia State Archives in Charleston, West Virginia, six articles from the Kentucky and West Virginia newspapers, as well as two contemporary dime novels will be used to show the effect that the sensational press had on the feud, this thesis will document how these two styles of papers covered the feud differently, and how those different coverages influenced Appalachian stereotypes as well as changes in journalism.⁹

One of the journalistic innovations to be explored in this thesis is yellow journalism. While scholars usually credit Joseph Pulitzer’s and William Randolph Hearst’s competition over readership, circulation, and the *Yellow Kid* cartoon in the 1890s as contributing to the birth of yellow journalism, careful analysis of the various New York newspapers has shown that yellow journalism was already occurring before the year 1895, when the *Yellow Kid* comic first appeared in Pulitzer’s *New York World* and before Hearst bought the *New York Morning Journal*.¹⁰ According to Anthony Fellow in his book *American Media History*, 1895 was a pivotal year for sensationalism, as it was around that time that Pulitzer revolutionized the American newspaper.

According to Fellow, Pulitzer's sensational *New York World* was different from other papers of that time because it "was readable and interesting . . . [with] special features about women, sports, and entertainment, . . . excitement in pseudo-science, sex, and crime . . . [and] dime novel features about the roaring West . . . and travel stories that took readers on magic carpets to foreign lands."¹¹ The freakish, odd, and unique were all part of Pulitzer's paper, and he was the first to print halftone photographs to highlight these special features.¹² Also as mentioned above, this was the year the *Yellow Kid* made his debut. Actually titled *Hogan's Alley*, the popular cartoon that gave yellow journalism its name featured children in a poor neighborhood of mixed ethnicity. The cartoon first appeared in the *World*, then shifted to the *Journal* when Hearst lured Richard P. Outcault away from Pulitzer.¹³ The *World* then hired another artist to draw a competing version of the Yellow Kid.

This thesis also will argue that it was likely through these sensational newspaper stories about the Hatfields and the McCoys that modern Appalachian stereotypes began. Many of the descriptions of the Hatfields and McCoys in these popular, nineteenth-century newspapers have similarities with current, simplistic images of Appalachian people. These include images of savage, degenerate people who live in a community that is backward, violent, and in need of civilized society.¹⁴

The stereotypes that arose from the feud have ultimately affected not just Kentucky and West Virginia but also all of the states and counties that make up the Appalachian region. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission, there are 420 counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio,

Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia that make up the Appalachian region, and this definition of the region will be used in this thesis.¹⁵

In breaking new ground, this thesis will explore an area that has been nearly ignored by media historians. The coverage of the Hatfield-McCoy feud made many contributions to the field of journalism, and this study will delve into what those contributions were and why they remain relevant.

While the Hatfields and McCoys are commonly associated with the rugged terrain of the Appalachian mountains, the families trace their ancestry to the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland.¹⁶ Both families descended from a shared culture in which family loyalty and pride were valued above all, and the dire consequences that could occur when that pride and loyalty were called into question.

According to R. Celeste Ray in his book *Highland Heritage: Scottish Americans in the American South*, “Americans of Scottish descent [were usually identified] in terms of attachment to place, expressive tradition . . . and a particular kinship system.”¹⁷ This kinship system played a particularly important role in terms of the feud. Claims of fealty were often exchanged between clans to solidify marriages, land grants, and promises of protection. In looking into the history of both families, it is noted that before the bloody events of the feud, members of the two families were on good terms with one another and marriages between the two were common. In fact, locals joked that “[The Hatfields and McCoys] in general were so intertwined that in 1849 they petitioned to move the Virginia-Kentucky state line so that the entire [Tug River] valley would lie within Virginia,” said Dean King, author of *The Feud: The Hatfields and the McCoys: The True Story*.¹⁸ They felt as if the state line divided friends and family and wanted to be seen as

one entity instead of two.¹⁹ When the feud finally erupted the two families were so interconnected that there were Hatfields and McCoy's involved on each side of the feud, it was not simply just one family against another. As residents in the valley in some ways saw themselves as one family, it makes sense that the events that sparked the feud would sow deep seated feelings of betrayal, loss, and anger.

While most scholars agree that the Hatfield-McCoy feud began with the killing of Ellison Hatfield in 1882, violent acts had occurred previously. One of the first was the murder of Asa Harmon McCoy in January 1865. He was the younger brother of the McCoy patriarch, Randall, and his death began the tensions that would ultimately erupt into the feud.²⁰ While the identity of Asa's killer was unknown, many suspected Jim Vance, the uncle of Devil Anse Hatfield. Vance and Hatfield, as well as other deserters from the Confederate armies of the Civil War, had created a guerilla army known as the "Logan Wildcats." According to feud scholars, the Wildcats were formed in response to West Virginia's admittance into the Union by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.²¹ The Wildcats almost saw themselves as a sort of personal army for their state, protecting it from raiding and marauding Union soldiers.

Suspicion arose that Vance had called for Asa McCoy's death because he was a Union sympathizer in a part of the country that was overwhelmingly Confederate. Since the Hatfields held considerable sway in the Tug River Valley, suspicion fell on their camp. But suspicion and wary eyes aside, the Hatfields had reason to hold a grudge against McCoy. First was the betrayal and rage that they most likely felt for him. At the time of his death, the Confederates knew the war was almost certainly lost.²² It is possible that Vance and Hatfield wanted McCoy dead because they might have thought, albeit

irrationally, that their defeat was caused by his betrayal. Even if that was not the case, Scots-Irish Americans, such as the Hatfields and McCoys, prized loyalty and family ties above all, McCoy's siding with the enemy would have been seen as unforgivable. Second, McCoy was responsible for killing a friend of Devil Anse Hatfield. The incident occurred when McCoy, as well as two of his Union comrades, attempted to steal some horses from the Hatfield camp.²³ During the skirmish that ensued, McCoy shot and fatally wounded the friend of Hatfield.²⁴ One undisputed fact about Devil Anse Hatfield is that he was loyal to those who were loyal to him, and killing such a person would have brought retaliation.²⁵

But the feelings of bad blood did not stop with the killing of Asa Harmon McCoy. In 1872, another blow was dealt to the McCoy family, when 5,000 acres of fertile timber lands were awarded to Devil Anse Hatfield. The lands in question belonged to Perry Cline, a politically savvy cosmopolitan attorney who was a cousin of Randall McCoy. At the time of his death, Cline's father left all of his lands to his nine-year old son—lands filled with valuable timber. When he came of age, Cline began logging the lands left to him by his father and earning a profit. But in 1872, Devil Anse Hatfield accused Cline of logging on Hatfield's lands and initiated a lawsuit. The suit was eventually settled out of court, with Cline handing over all 5,000 acres to Hatfield. The reason remains a mystery, but nine years later in a letter to the West Virginia governor, Cline hinted at possible intimidation on the part of Hatfield: "These men has [sic] made good citizens leave their homes and forsake all they had, and refuse to let any person tend their lands."²⁶ While Cline did not specifically state that Hatfield intimidated him into handing his lands over without a fight, it was strongly insinuated. Another possible reason is that the judge who

would have presided over the trial, had it gone to court, was a Hatfield. Cline may have assumed that taking the suit to court was pointless, due to Devil Anse's likelihood of winning a favorable judgment.

Six years later in 1878, an incident known as the "hog wars" occurred. Randall McCoy was working his fields with his family on a hot summer day when Floyd Hatfield came riding by in his wagon, a couple of fat hogs lazing idly in the back. McCoy glanced at the hogs in Hatfield's cart and immediately told him that the hogs were his. Hatfield vehemently denied it, stating that he had found the hogs wandering around in the woods and therefore they were his. McCoy took Hatfield to court and charged him with stealing his property. Because both men lived in Pikeville, Kentucky, and were related, the trial took place in McCoy territory in Kentucky. At that time, on the McCoy side of the Tug, the presiding judge, as was the case of Cline, was a cousin of Devil Anse Hatfield and would have had Hatfield sympathies.

It was not uncommon for hogs to run wild in the woods. To identify their property, hog owners would often cut a specific mark in their hogs' ears. In his testimony, Randall McCoy stated that the cuts in the hogs' ears were clearly his mark. Hatfield, on the other hand, stated that there was no mark, so the hogs had no owner and were therefore his for the taking.

Several witnesses were called, but the "star witness" was Bill Staton, a McCoy relative who was married to a Hatfield. He ended up siding with Floyd Hatfield, who was eventually acquitted of all charges.²⁷ While Floyd Hatfield was given the hogs, there was still a possibility that the hogs could have belonged to McCoy. According to feud

scholars, while hogs were branded with a specific mark, running through branches and underbrush could rip a hog's ears, leaving the mark unrecognizable.²⁸

The next episode took place two years before the events that would start the feud, at the annual Election Day celebrations in August 1880. On that day, Devil Anse's oldest son Johnson "Johnse" Hatfield, met and fell in love with Randall McCoy's daughter Roseanna. Wanting to be away from the rowdy crowds of Blackberry Creek, Kentucky, Johnse convinced Roseanna to follow him to a secluded spot in the woods, where they romanced each other until well past sundown. Fearing the wrath of her father, Roseanna revealed to Johnse that she was terrified at the prospect of returning home and said that her father would never allow them to be together. Johnse convinced her to run away with him to the Hatfield homestead in Logan County, West Virginia, where Roseanna lived for several months.

Wanting his favorite daughter to come home, Randall convinced her to return. Roseanna went gladly, convinced that Johnse was never going to marry her.²⁹ But Roseanna's feelings for Johnse proved to be so strong that when her brothers began riding to the Hatfield residence, demanding retribution for their sister's soiled honor, she rode bareback in the pouring summer rain to the Hatfield residence, warning Devil Anse that her brothers were out for Johnse's blood. Enraged by what he saw as his daughter's final betrayal and the fact that she was pregnant with Johnse's child, Randall disowned Roseanna, forcing her to leave for the refuge of the home of her Aunt Betty in Stringtown, Kentucky, where she would await the birth of her child.

Bad feelings between the Hatfields and McCoys increased a short time later, when Johnse abandoned the pregnant Roseanna, claiming that his father objected to a

marriage between a Hatfield and a daughter of Randall McCoy. But only two months after leaving Roseanna, Johnse married her cousin Nancy, the daughter of the slain Asa Harmon McCoy. The McCoy's did not understand why Devil Anse would object to the marriage of Johnse and Randall's daughter when he allowed the marriage of Johnse and the daughter of Randall's brother. But Roseanna's sadness did not end with her abandonment by Johnse and her disownment by her father. She gave birth to a sickly daughter, Sarah "Sally" Elizabeth, who contracted the measles and died only eight months after her birth.

The tale of the "mountain Romeo and Juliet" finally led to the events of Blackberry Creek, Kentucky, Election Day in August of 1882, when the feud began.³⁰ The beginning involved four people: Devil Anse's younger brother, Ellison, and Tolbert, Pharmed, and Randall Jr., the three sons of Randall McCoy. No one knows exactly what was said on that day, but Ellison made a drunken comment to the three McCoy's that apparently sent them into a rage.³¹ They attacked Ellison with knives and guns, leaving him badly hurt, with twenty-seven gun and knife wounds.

While Ellison was carried away on a crude stretcher, the three McCoy's were escorted to nearby Pikeville to stand trial. But before they could reach a courtroom, they were overtaken by a band of Hatfields led by Devil Anse and taken prisoner in a West Virginia schoolhouse. The McCoy family begged Devil Anse to release them and have a proper trial at the Pikeville courthouse. Devil Anse refused, believing that a Kentucky trial would not give his brother the justice that he deserved. But Devil Anse made a deal: if Ellison did not die, Randall McCoy's three sons would go free; if not, they would feel his justice.

The McCoys waited anxiously, hoping that Ellison would survive. But it was not to be. Three days later, he died, and the fate of the three McCoys had been signed with tears and blood. The Hatfields took Tolbert, Pharmer, and Randall Jr. from the schoolhouse to a group of papaw trees in the middle of the West Virginia woods, where they were bound and shot to death. Devil Anse's justice had been served.³²

So began the bloodshed, and the killing—and so began the feud.

The melee that ensued lasted for years and included the killing of horses, the poisoning of wells, and the burning of barns. Threats of harm and death were made on both sides, and it was a threat from McCoy that set into motion the next big event in the feud.

On a quiet New Year's night in 1888, the McCoy family was sleeping peacefully in their beds under blankets with pillows beneath their heads. They did not hear the sound of footsteps approaching their cabin, boots crunching on the hard Kentucky soil. McCoy's twenty-five-year-old son, Calvin, awoke when he heard shouts outside, demanding his father, Randall, come out and face the group that had gathered. Calvin grabbed his rifle, told the rest of his family to stay in bed, and approached the downstairs window. What he saw was a group of Hatfields, their horses blowing wisps of white vapor into the cold January air.

Gunfire ensued from both sides, between Calvin and his father on the defense inside and the Hatfields on the offense outside. In the commotion, there was a call to set the McCoy house on fire. In the torrent of fire and gunpowder, Randall's teenaged daughter, Alifair, poked her head out the door, curious to see the fighting and shouting.

Her adolescent curiosity proved to be her undoing as she was gunned down. Alifair's mother, Sarah, rushed to her dying daughter's side, begging the Hatfields to cease their fire so that she could attend to her. But in the midst of her maternal grief, Sarah was bashed in the head with the butt of a rifle and fell unconscious to the ground beside her daughter.

Calvin told his father to escape out the back door while he attempted to keep the Hatfields at bay. But Calvin was shot down as well, and the McCoy home burned to the ground.³³

The feud ended in 1890, when the man who confessed to firing the shot that killed Alifair McCoy was hanged in Pike County. He was Ellison "Cottontop" Mounts, who was the illegitimate son of Ellison Hatfield and was rumored to have been mentally challenged. While several other men involved in the feud were sentenced to life in prison for the death of the three McCoys in 1882 as well as the death of Alifair McCoy in 1888, Mounts was the only one executed. Seen as a scapegoat by many, he confessed on the scaffold that he had fired the shot that killed Alifair. With his hanging, the long and tragic feud was finally over. There would be no more fighting, no more bloodshed— and no more feud.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Much has been written about the Hatfield-McCoy Feud and the state of journalism in the late 1800s, but little specifically about the feud and its coverage in newspapers. This thesis will use scholarly books, newspaper articles, and dime novels to examine the feud itself, the late 1800s press, as well as the effects that the press may have had on the creation of modern Appalachian stereotypes.

Several well-known books have been written about the feud, one being *The Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil Anse Hatfield* by Dr. Coleman C. Hatfield and Robert Y. Spence. Hatfield is the great-grandson of Devil Anse Hatfield, and with the help of Spence he compiled stories about his great-grandfather. Hatfield and Spence began the 2003 book with stories of Devil Anse Hatfield's youth on the Appalachian frontier and as a young man serving on the Confederate side in the Civil War. Devil Anse was described as a troublemaker and a jokester, and in his youth would often disappear for days at a time, frightening his mother, Nancy.¹

One of the best known family stories was about Devil Anse's first bear hunt, which occurred in 1854, when he was fifteen. Devil Anse, at that time affectionately called "Ansie" by his mother, took his rifle and some supplies and told his parents that he was going into the woods to hunt for squirrels. When suppertime came and Ansie still was not back, his mother began to get worried, fearing that something had happened to her son. But Ansie's father, Ephraim, told Nancy not to worry, because Anse was a strong boy and could handle himself.

But Anse was gone all night and the next day, and instead of continuing to react nonchalantly to his son's absence, Ephraim took his oldest son, Valentine, and they went

to Ben's Creek, where Anse's uncles lived. Anse was close to his uncles, and Ephraim thought he might have stopped there for breakfast. But when his uncles said they had not seen him either, a search party of concerned family and friends set off into the woods to look for the missing fifteen year-old. The tale ends with Hatfield reciting the exciting family tale of the young Devil Anse Hatfield killing a bear with his bare hands.² The book took a more serious turn, however, when the events of the feud were discussed. Unlike many tellings of the feud, this book was unusual because it humanized Devil Anse instead of turning him into the corrupt villain of legend. By telling the story that way, Hatfield and Spence managed to portray a family patriarch, who acted out of necessity and love for his family, and not just out for ruthless killing.³

However, one could question the reliability of Coleman C. Hatfield as a narrator. It is possible his relationship to the famous Hatfield patriarch biased his account. To balance Hatfield's book, a second book was referenced extensively: *The Hatfields and the McCoys* by renowned feud scholar Otis K. Rice. Since he has no familial connection to either family, it is more likely that his 2010 book would be more free of bias toward one side of the feud.

In the introduction, Rice stated that long conversations recalled verbatim are by their very nature suspect, something that Coleman C. Hatfield did extensively in his book.⁴ Rice also had no problem calling the characters of both families into question, at one point criticizing the Hatfields for taking the law into their own hands instead of letting the judicial system handle it.⁵ Another instance of this occurred when Rice listed some of the illegal or immoral activities of the Hatfields, including carrying concealed

and deadly weapons, giving alcohol to a minor, and banding together to disturb the peace.⁶

One of the most arresting claims Rice made is that the Hatfield-McCoy feud was not the only feud occurring in the area at the time. He described two others: The Hargis Cockrell Marcum-Callahan feud of Breathitt County, Kentucky, which started before the Civil War and ended in 1902, and the French-Eversole War, which occurred in Hazard, Kentucky, from 1887 to 1894.⁷ While these feuds were not conducted on the scale of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, they reveal that the famous feud was not the only bloody conflict to have occurred in Appalachia.

The nation's press played a crucial role in the late 1800s in how Americans understood Appalachia and the feud, in particular because the press was undergoing major changes. The newspapers that covered the feud were chosen to show early examples of "yellow journalism," an offshoot of sensationalism. In his book *American Media History*, Anthony Fellow states that yellow journalism was very similar to sensational journalism but was distinguished by a few "defining characteristics," some of which were exaggerated headlines, pictures that held little to no significance, faked interviews, and heavy self-promotion.⁸ This style of journalism stood in stark contrast to the more "objective" style of reporting, which favored detachment, fairness, and balance.⁹ The first steps toward objectivity were taken in the 1830s with the nonpartisan detachment of the Jacksonian era penny press.¹⁰ Other standards of objectivity were seen through the following years, including the use of the inverted pyramid during the Civil War and the idea of naïve empiricism in the middle of the century.¹¹ Michael Schudson states in his book *Discovering the News* that these "pieces" all came together during the

coverage of World War I, in which objectivity became standard journalistic practice.¹² Journalism scholars have widely accepted the theory that sensational journalism began in the late nineteenth century when newspaper moguls William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer became engaged in a war over circulation and readership in New York City.¹³ Sensationalism went on to be defined as a school of journalism that “goes too far in appealing . . . to ‘fundamental and primitive desires’ . . . [with] material [being] published strictly for entertainment.”¹⁴ Scholars have come to an agreement that the term “yellow journalism” came from a “war” that Hearst and Pulitzer had over a popular comic strip character known as the *Yellow Kid*, created in 1895 for Pulitzer’s *New York World*.¹⁵ The *Yellow Kid*’s real name was Mickey Dugan, and he appeared as a character in *Hogan’s Alley*, a popular comic strip in Pulitzer’s paper.¹⁶ Dugan was a bald, beady-eyed young boy with large, elephant-like ears and protruding buck teeth, who received his nickname from an over-sized yellow pajama shirt that he wore in the popular comic. When Hearst saw the popularity that Pulitzer gained from *Hogan’s Alley*, he attempted to hire *Hogan’s Alley* creator Richard F. Outcault away from Pulitzer’s paper.¹⁷ A bidding war for Outcault ensued in 1898, with Hearst ultimately winning. With the loss of Outcault, Pulitzer hired another cartoonist to imitate the character, leading to a time when there were two Yellow Kids on newspaper pages. This highly publicized feud gave rise to the name “yellow journalism.”¹⁸ But while the *Yellow Kid* was the symbol of the sensational journalism movement, the actual movement was spawned by Hearst’s and Pulitzer’s heated attempts to outsell each other with the use of exaggerated headlines, fabricated stories, and shameless self-promotion.¹⁹

But as analysis of the following newspapers will show, these hallmarks of yellow journalism were occurring well before the war over ownership of the *Yellow Kid* ensued. One of the papers used for reference was Pulitzer's *New York World*. In the February 8, 1888, edition of his paper, the headline on the top left of the page read "A Fight to the Death," and attempted to "document" the events of the feud. But instead of writing an accurate, objective description of the events that occurred, what was published was a sensationalized account of a specific group of people and the environment in which they lived. He described the feud as a "tireless death struggle . . . waged with unrelenting malice . . . [sending] a score of the hostile factions to their graves riddled with bullets."²⁰ Pulitzer's paper also used highly sensationalized language and descriptions in the story with the voices of the Appalachian people written in a dialectic tone with poor speech, bad grammar, and incomplete sentences.²¹ It is possible that these early examples of Appalachian speech particularly reinforced the stereotypical bad grammar of the region that still exists today.

Another New York paper that frequently covered the feud was the *New York Sun*, with John Spears as reporter. In the October 7, 1888, issue of the *Sun*, a large headline read "A Mountain Feud" with the words "A Remarkable Story of Murder and Outrage" underneath.²² Like Pulitzer, Spears added a sensational spin to his stories, beginning the article with a story of how a group of men brutally shot a woman through the heart, while she was "begging with clasped hands and streaming eyes for her life."²³ He later detailed the fantastical tale of Jim Vance getting shot and killed by "Bad" Frank Phillips, not forgetting to include how Phillips "scattered [Jim's] brains over the leaves for a yard around."²⁴ Spears also portrayed the people of the region with characteristically poor

grammar, at one point quoting a man as saying, “Anse he’s got some boys thet’s [sic] mighty mean . . . They’ve went on an carried on till I don’t blame the authorities for tryin’ to punish sech [sic.] triflin’ fellers.”²⁵ But there have been arguments about whether dialect should be used in quotes at all or be replaced by more “proper” English. At the end of the day, it comes down to ethics – some say that when something is placed in quotation marks, it should be an exact word-for-word dictation of what the person said, while some argue that it’s perfectly fine to doctor a quote to make it sound better, make it grammatically correct, easier to understand, etc.²⁶ But the ethical implications of this past issue cannot be viewed with modern lenses, especially since it was common to use dialect in nineteenth-century fiction, such as Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Joel Chandler Harris’s *Uncle Remus* stories.²⁷

Dime novels became another popular medium in which people read about the feud. Because these novels were used primarily for entertainment purposes, the stories were even more outlandish and embellished with images and language that were meant to shock rather than inform. The first dime novel was published in June 1860 by the New York publishing firm Beadle and Adams, and was entitled *Malaeska; the Indian Wife of the White Hunter* by Mrs. Ann Stephens.²⁸ By 1864, over five-million Beadle and Adams dime novels were in circulation, and by the late 1870s hundreds of dime novels from competing firms flooded the market.²⁹ The last true dime novel series, Street and Smith’s *New Buffalo Bill Weekly*, ceased publication in 1912.³⁰

Many of the more popular ones were published in New York City and spun tales of the “barbaric” Hatfields and McCoys, who supposedly inspired fear in the Tug River Valley region. These dime novels were not bound to any standards of journalism so they

had the freedom to publish strictly for entertainment value. Most pages contained lurid descriptions of men who reveled in bloodshed and old women with stern faces who smoked pipes on their front porches.³¹ An image of the cover of one of these dime novels can be found in Appendix B.

One of these dime novels, *The Hatfield and McCoy Outlaws: A Full and Complete History of the Deadly Feud Existing between the Hatfield and McCoy Clans*, was published in 1889 in New York by Richard K. Cox. It was filled with sensational stories of men with multiple wives and even women living with multiple husbands.³² Cox went on to compare the women to squaws, who had no minds of their own and only concerned themselves with their husbands and domestic affairs.³³ There was also a mention of an unnamed boy of seven, who was said to have been the son of Roseanna McCoy and lived at the McCoy homestead with his mother.³⁴ This was a statement that had no basis in fact. It was known that Roseanna gave birth to a daughter, who did not survive the first year. Neither did Roseanna go back to her parents' home, as she was disowned by her father she lived the rest of her life in the home of her Aunt Betty. What also was interesting about these dime novels was that they regularly copied passages verbatim from some of the newspaper stories circulating at the time. An example of this came from Cox's dime novel, which directly copied passages from a February 7, 1888 edition of the *New York Herald*. The *Herald* piece described a typical Appalachian town as a dirty place filled with unkempt, lazy idlers.³⁵ In another passage from that same article, the narrator dictated a conversation he had with a young Appalachian woman, rife with poor grammar and inelegant speech.³⁶ These examples showed the overall impact of the newspaper coverage, as the sensationalized news stories spreading beyond

newspapers to popular reading. Such newspaper articles and dime novels showed how Appalachian people were viewed at the time.

To to show the effect that the coverage of the feud may have had on the public's view of Appalachia, it's important to examine representations of the region *before* the feud occurred. One of these was a book entitled *Fisher's River (North Carolina) Scenes and Characters* written by Hardin E. Taliaferro in 1859. The book was a collection of stories about the people and culture of Fisher's River, told between 1820 and 1829. In the introduction of his book, Taliaferro quickly distinguished himself from the sensational yellow journalists of the feud years. He described the landscapes and people of the area as "romantic," and while he stated that the people were uneducated, he praised the richness of their rustic literature and the complexities of their culture.³⁷ He went on to describe an encounter he had with a man named Johnson Snow, whom he compared to Henry VIII and described as generous, warm, and kind-hearted.³⁸ At the end of his book, as he was about to make his way home, Taliaferro described how his guide implored him to postpone his journey and come celebrate at a party he was throwing at his home that night. Although he declined, his guide graciously wished him safe travels, and for the Lord to be with him.³⁹

Another similar book, a novel entitled *Georgia Scenes* by Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, was published in 1850. Longstreet, a native of Georgia, attempted to document growing up in rural Georgia as he remembered it. Like *Fisher's River*, *Georgia Scenes* opened with the narrator's description of the landscape, which he found to be charming, enchanting, and filled with blushing flowers.⁴⁰ In another scene, Longstreet described a brawl the narrator witnessed between two youths. While the scene seemed

like something that would be found in Crawford's exaggerated tales, Longstreet veered away from that when it was discovered that the "brawl" wasn't really a brawl at all, rather the two youths were rehearsing scenes for a play.⁴¹ The narrator went on to describe an encounter he had with a very clever man named Ned Brace, who enjoyed playing with people's perceptions of him. A practical joker with a hospitable nature, Brace's humorous antics in secular and sacred life made him the most popular character in Longstreet's novel.⁴² While Longstreet depicted his characters as uneducated and a bit rough around the edges, he placed emphasis on their tenacity and strength of will over their speech patterns and mannerisms.

Taliaferro's and Longstreet's depictions of Appalachian people as kind, clever, and complex were a far cry from the way sensational reporters such as T.C. Crawford described them, which was as a group of disheveled, simple-minded mountain men who chewed their tobacco and drank their whiskey while polishing their guns and continually keeping one overly suspicious eye peeled. T.C. Crawford's contemporary book, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States*, contained Appalachian stereotypes. Crawford was one of the main feud correspondents at the time and was known for writing sensationalized stories for Pulitzer at the *New York World*. He ended up taking the stories he had written for the *World* and turning them into his book. Crawford claimed that his accounts were factual, yet he was quick to stereotype. For example, he described the region as "barbarous, uncivilized . . . wholly savage . . . [and] wholly isolated from railroad or telegraphic communication."⁴³

Tom E. Dotson in his 2014 book *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner: Rescuing History*, described how the tales told by the yellow journalists went on

to define modern Appalachian stereotypes. According to Dotson, many of the original feud writers cited the yellow journalists as sources, as they were seen as the closest observers to the events. This started an inaccurate historical “daisy chain,” in which stories that were either folktales or straight up lies were transformed into history by historians.⁴⁴ Many of these involved tales of drunken orgies, extreme violence, and questionable characters.⁴⁵

Anthony Harkins continued the trail of the Appalachian stereotype in his 2005 book *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon*. The book documented how the tales of the yellow journalists went on to influence John Fox Jr., who is seen by many as the father of the modern Appalachian as we know him.⁴⁶ Fox went on to publish a series of novels about life in Appalachia, many of which Harkins stated were the inspiration for the hundreds of movies about Appalachia in the 1900s.⁴⁷ These movies served as the catalyst for the popular Appalachian sitcoms that began to appear in the 1950s, including *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*.⁴⁸

Todd Snyder in his 2014 book *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity* stated that starting in the 1970s Appalachian stereotypes took a turn to the macabre, playing on people’s fears of the Appalachians. This comes back full-circle to the yellow journalists of the feud, who used the same tactics to play off the fears of their readers.⁴⁹ An example of such a scary stereotype appeared in the 1972 movie *Deliverance*, based on James Dickey’s 1970 novel, which highlighted ignorance and violence in the remote backwoods of Georgia.

Wherever or whenever Appalachian stereotypes began, there is a familiar theme that surrounds them: isolation. As David C. Hsiung said in his book *Two Worlds in the*

Tennessee Mountains: Exploring the Origins of Appalachian Stereotypes, the

Appalachian man goes back to his roots and settles in the same area in the same cabin that his grandfather did, essentially becoming his grandfather re-born.⁵⁰

This theme of isolation fueled stereotypes because it made the people of Appalachia something of an elusive mystery, they were a people who experienced little interaction with others and were ostensibly cut off from the outside world.

As stated previously, while the feud has been a popular subject with many authors and historians, little exists about the feud and its relationship with yellow journalism. Study of the New York newspapers that covered the feud show that yellow journalism was going on well before Hearst, the *Yellow Kid*, or the Spanish-American War; in fact, several West Virginia and Kentucky newspapers actually called out the New York papers for writing made-up, sensationalized stories in order to increase profit and circulation, exactly what journalism historians state Hearst was doing when yellow journalism began. The yellow journalists of the feud were in fact using media priming to influence how their readers viewed the Appalachian people.⁵¹ As research has shown, the media can change and influence an audience's views about a specific group of people by making some aspects more salient than others, which can in turn cause the reading audience to equate those aspects more with that group of people.⁵² According to communications researcher Florian Arendt, "considerable empirical evidence indicates that the mass media depict specific social groups in stereotypical ways that can influence our thinking, feeling, and behavior. Regular exposure to media stereotypes can contribute to the development of stereotypical memory traces."⁵³ These traces create stereotypical associations in memory that can be activated whether an individual believes them to be

accurate or not.⁵⁴ However, there is a vast difference between stereotype association and stereotype application, as Arendt points out. While stereotype associations are largely automatic responses that an individual has no control over, “stereotype application represents the use of stereotypical associations in making judgments about a person or a group. Thus, even if stereotypes were automatically activated, individuals can reject these cognitions and decide never to use them for an overtly expressed judgment.”⁵⁵

The process of media priming involves taking these stereotypes and producing and reproducing them on a mass scale by, according to Arendt, increasing “the accessibility of stereotypes by increasing the availability of new stereotype-congruent memories...and by increasing the accessibility of already existing available stereotype-congruent memories.”⁵⁶ But that doesn’t automatically make media priming into a so-called hypodermic needle, the stereotype of strong-effects media messages quickly creating or changing attitudes, because while media priming may activate the depicted concepts in memory, individuals can decide not to use them.⁵⁷ This desire to not use stereotypes is known as “negation,” or an internal attempt to reject the negative stereotypes that are being presented.⁵⁸ But once the priming has taken place, stereotypes begin to take hold, and can be difficult to change once they have been formed.⁵⁹

Readers and viewers have not only been primed to view the people of the Appalachian region in a certain light by the press, but also by books and films.⁶⁰ This study will argue that those exaggerated images first began to be placed in the minds of the American populace by nineteenth-century coverage of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, at a time in history when few people had ventured into that part of the country, and where stories and descriptions were ripe for the picking.

To address the question of the feud and its association with yellow journalism, an examination was conducted of newspaper articles and dime novels from the years 1888 to 1890. One of the resources used was the *Chronicling America* database (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>), where a search with the keywords “hatfields,” and “mccoys,” in the states New York, West Virginia, and Kentucky yielded forty articles. The West Virginia State Archives in Charleston, West Virginia yielded two dime novels, a further seven newspaper articles not found in the *Chronicling America* database, and a copy of T.C. Crawford’s book *An American Vendetta*. A thorough search of the Library of Congress website and Wordcat.org using the keywords “Hatfield McCoy” alone and paired with “dime novel” and “special collections” turned up no other dime novels from the Hatfield-McCoy era. The New York newspapers were then compared with the Kentucky and West Virginia newspapers, where differences were studied for tone, language, sensationalism, and overall accuracy.

To gain more insight into the effect the press had on Appalachian stereotypes, the *Real Hatfield, Real McCoy, Real Matewan* Facebook page was used.⁶¹ The group is run by Ryan Hardesty, a descendant of the Blackberry Creek Hatfields and a feud historian. Hardesty started the group in order to create a platform devoted to the “true” history of the feud, a place where members (amateur and professional historians alike) could share photographs, personal stories, family histories, and historical documents to show what really occurred during the feud, not just the tall tales perpetuated by the yellow journalists. Hardesty and fellow feud historian Tom Dotson recommended the books *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner: Rescuing History* and *The Missing McCoys*, both by Dotson, as well as *The Dramatic Story of a Mountain Feud*, written by

John Spears and annotated by Hardesty, and *The Selected Short Fiction of John Fox, Jr.* All four books provided excellent information on how the press created the Appalachian stereotype and contributed to it becoming ingrained in popular culture.

Within the books, a common theme was presented: that it was T.C. Crawford who was largely responsible for the creation of the Appalachian stereotype. A search for “T.C. Crawford” and “stereotypes” in the Google Books database (https://books.google.com/bkshp?hl=en&tab=wp&ei=3TBnVrmMDYXOsAXm_LfwDQ&ved=0EKkuCAooCg) yielded over fifteen-hundred results. Analysis of the most relevant materials led to the books *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* by Anthony Harkins and *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity* by Todd Snyder. These two books together with the other materials presented a possible trail for the Appalachian stereotype, which could be traced back from T.C. Crawford and the yellow journalists all the way to the feud historians of today.

Using all the sources together, a picture began to develop of how these early examples of yellow journalism eventually went on to create the Appalachian stereotype as it is known today. This thesis will use that picture to argue that not only was yellow journalism occurring before the generally accepted date, but that it ultimately went on to define an entire sub-section of the American population.

Chapter 3: The Townies Come to the Hills, Early Examples of Yellow Journalism

When news spread to New York about the destruction of the McCoy home and the death of innocent women and children on New Year's night 1888, papers sent reporters to Kentucky to cover the events, including T.C. Crawford of the *New York World*, John Spears of the *New York Sun*, and James Creelman of the *New York Herald*. Images of that event from newspaper coverage can be found in Appendix C. At that time, the Appalachian frontier was akin to a mysterious jungle, and papers jumped on the stories.

Journalism historians have maintained that yellow journalism arose from the competition that Hearst and Pulitzer had over money, readership, and circulation. One of the most recognized examples of this was the coverage of the Spanish-American War in 1898 by both newspaper moguls.¹ But there are problems with this theory. The Spanish-American War did not begin until 1898, and the events of the Hatfield-McCoy feud were sparking sensationalized “yellow” stories eight years earlier. Another problem was the assumption that Hearst was the one who was responsible for the start of yellow journalism with his coverage of the war. Pulitzer and others had already covered the events of the Hatfield-McCoy feud years before the war had begun.

It was Pulitzer's *New York World*, Hearst's chief rival, that most heavily covered the feud.² The *New York World* had employed Crawford, and he was known as one of the main reporters of the Hatfield and McCoy era, with his collection of stories for the *World* eventually became his 1889 book, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States*. He claimed in the preface of his book that he had “not attempted to change the story as then told,”³ but his actions and words proved otherwise. The stories that he

told in his book as well as in his newspaper articles did nothing but reinforce the already poor images of the Appalachian people that had been conjured up by the feud, images that had been conjured up in the minds of the American people and served to only reinforce, not clarify, damaging stereotypes. Images from some of Crawford's work can be found in Appendix D.

In a February 1888 edition of the *World*, Crawford wrote a full-page story of the feud, complete with colorful descriptions and vivid illustrations. In the opening paragraph he said: "In this primitive community [the Tug River valley], where school children are taught to use their Winchester rifles with unerring accuracy and every woman wears a pistol in her belt, THE WORLD correspondent took his life into his hand while collecting his facts, and more than once was halted on the road to show cause why he should not be shot."⁴

This type of language and description was used throughout Crawford's articles for the *World*, where he often wrote the voices of the Appalachian people in a dialectic tone with poor speech, bad grammar, and incomplete sentences. For example, in the same edition of the *World*, he quoted a young man who approached him: "Be you'uns McCoys or Hatfields?"⁵ He again quoted the young man as saying, "I 'lowed, maybe, you'uns wus McCoys."⁶ It is quite possible that these early "examples" of Appalachian speech particularly reinforced the stereotypical bad grammar of the region that still exists today. It was not only the adults who suffered Crawford's unflattering descriptions; he continually wrote that the children of the region were not well educated, and every child knew how to shoot a gun before he or she could read or write. He also stated frequently how suspicious the people were: "Every one who visits that region who is not a land

speculator or a drummer [a traveling salesman] is regarded as a detective.”⁷ He claimed that the natives did not like outsiders and would turn their rifles on anyone who was not a close friend or a family member.

Some of Crawford’s more outlandish claims came from his book. For example, he wrote:

I merely give these illustrations to indicate the light way in which the taking of life is regarded among the people of this section, even outside of the wild and barbarous region dominated by the Hatfield-McCoy feud. While there may be no more murders committed in proportion to the population than in more civilized states, it is a fact that the murders committed are by men in a different rank in life, and that the pretexts are more often trivial, inconsequential quarrels than elsewhere.⁸

In this quote, Crawford apparently showed the attitude that he had toward the Appalachian people, that he thought them “wild and barbarous.” This was a conclusion he reached after only being in the region for a few days, hardly enough time to establish a sound judgment.⁹ He did not attempt to give a well-researched, well-rounded representation of the people.

But Crawford’s questionable journalistic practices did not just end with unflattering characterizations and embellished claims, he made statements that had no basis in historical fact, typical of the dime novels of that era. For example, at one point he claimed that Johnse Hatfield was “a married man” when he met Roseanna McCoy. That was not true. It was readily known that Johnse did not marry until after his affair with Roseanna had ended, when he married Nancy McCoy. Crawford also claimed that “Johnse Hatfield took [Roseanna] to his home and told his wife . . . to acknowledge her as the head of the household.” That was another falsity. He took her to his family home, which he did because Roseanna was in great fear of returning to her father.¹⁰

Another journalist known for his sensationalized coverage of the feud was John Spears, a reporter for the *New York Sun*. Like Crawford, Spears eventually turned his coverage of the feud into a book, *The Hatfields & The McCoys: The Dramatic Story of a Mountain Feud*. Spears is considered by several feud historians to be the “yellowest of the yellow” journalists, and was known for manufacturing lies and sensational stories about events that had either never occurred or were highly embellished.¹¹

In one of his stories, Spears described Johnse Hatfield, oldest son of Devil Anse Hatfield, as “an outlaw in Kentucky . . . [who] had been indicted at that time, although but eighteen years-old, twenty-seven times.”¹² What Spears failed to disclose, however, was that Johnse only had one charge against him at the time for carrying a concealed weapon.¹³ Spears later on made the Hatfields out to be cold-blooded child killers when he described an incident where a group of Hatfields mistook one of Randall McCoy’s very young sons for one of the boys involved in the death of Ellison Hatfield. In the account, the Hatfields brutally executed the young boy for a crime he didn’t commit.¹⁴ This was most likely an attempt by Spears to make the Hatfields look like bloodthirsty villains, as no records were ever found that formally charged the men with the killing of a child.¹⁵ Yet a third story by Spears told of Cap Hatfield, another son of Devil Anse, and one of Cap’s farm hands, Tom Wallace, beating two women for nearly forty minutes with a freshly butchered cow’s tail.¹⁶ A freshly butchered cow’s tail would have weighed about as much as a major-league baseball bat, and there’s little to no possibility that two women could have survived such an attack.¹⁷ There’s also the problem again of the records: if two women had been nearly beaten to death, there would most likely have been some record of an arrest or of the incident occurring, of which there was none.¹⁸ While it’s

likely that some sort of physical altercation occurred, it was not to the sensationalized extreme as portrayed by Spears.¹⁹

West Virginia and Kentucky newspapers were outraged by the yellow coverage, and there were several instances where they called out the New York papers for presenting false, sensationalized stories that were damaging to the reputation of the area. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* stated in its January 25, 1888 issue that “[West Virginia] is acquiring an unenviable notoriety abroad on account of reports similar to the one which appears in this morning’s *Intelligencer* . . . ‘West Virginia Lawlessness’ is a heading which is kept standing in the news columns of the metropolitan papers. Some steps should be taken by our authorities to relieve the state of this disgrace.”²⁰ The *Weekly Register* expressed similar sentiments in its February 15, 1888 issue, in which it called the New York reporters “journalistic liars for money” who believed that “the state of West Virginia [could] go to the dogs so long as they [got] a sensation out of her.”²¹

Several Kentucky newspapers were quick to point out the yellow nature of the New York papers as well. In fact the *Big Sandy News*, a newspaper in Louisa, Kentucky, called out directly the *New York Herald’s* February 7, 1888 article *Bloody Border War* in its February 16 issue. This article, described on page thirty-three, presented a less-than-objective view of the town of Cattlesburg, Kentucky. The *Big Sandy News* called the reporter (most likely James Creelman) “an infernal ‘yap’” and stated “it is to be regretted that any newspaper will, through its columns, give publicity to the productions of such an unscrupulous profligate . . . the high calling of the newspaper fraternity always demands at least a fair presentation of a case.”²² The *Climax*, a Madison County, Kentucky newspaper, agreed that accounts of the feud were exaggerated. The September 12, 1888

issue stated that “Hon. W.H. Weddington, acting Judge of the Criminal Court in Pike county, writes . . . saying that the frequent reports of trouble . . . resulting from the Hatfield-McCoy feud, are untrue . . . it is a fact that much sensational and untruthful stuff has been published about Pike county.”²³

Cementing the yellow nature of the feud coverage is how the New York papers and the Appalachian papers covered the same event.²⁴ For example, in July 1889 it was reported that “Bad” Frank Phillips had murdered a young Virginia attorney. The *Big Sandy News* covered it in its July 18 issue, in which it simply stated “Frank Phillips . . . murdered a young Virginia attorney in cold blood one day last week. The killing occurred in Buchanan county and is said to have been done upon no provocation whatever.”²⁵ The *New York Sun* had also covered the killing in its July 12 issue, but gave it a much more sensational spin. Under the headline “Murder by One of the Hatfield-McCoy Gang,” it described how “Frank Phillips, one of the Hatfield-McCoy gang, for whom there is a large reward offered in this State, was at Grundy, Va. And vicinity, handling a Winchester rifle and revolver, with remarks that he would ‘do’ the people . . . during his wild career he struck Wm. Kaiser, an attorney, on the head with a revolver, dangerously wounding him. While he was punishing Kaiser . . . he was shot and killed . . . Phillips has gone to the mountains.”²⁶ Instead of simply stating what happened, the *Sun* made a point of detailing Phillips’ Winchester rifle, “wild” career, and desire to “do” the people – a stereotypical view of the wild, dangerous mountain man. It also made sure to point out that not only had Phillips just run away, but he ran away into the mountains – an Appalachian hillbilly running back to the security of the hills.

Another instance of this was the sentencing of Ellison Mounts. The West Virginia paper *Spirit of Jefferson* described the sentencing with simple words in its September 17, 1889 issue, simply stating “Ellison Mounts has just been sentenced to be hanged on December 3.”²⁷ The Kentucky paper *The Climax* described it similarly in its November, 20 issue, matter-of-factly stating “The Court of Appeals has affirmed the decision of the Pike county court in the Hatfield-McCoy cases . . . Ellison Mounts will hang for the murder of the girl, Alice [sic] McCoy, sister of the murdered man.”²⁸ While the Kentucky and West Virginia papers used a much more objective tone, the *New York Sun* gave a more sensationalized account in their November, 29 issue. Using the headline “East Kentucky in Terror,” the *Sun* described a much more “exciting” account:

On last Saturday the Court of Appeals of Kentucky decided that one of the Hatfields must hang. Since the decision of the Court [to hang Ellison Mounts] there are signs of another outbreak among the outlaws of Eastern Kentucky. Judge Lilly of Estill county is afraid to take direct routes to the courts in his district, for fear of being ambushed by some of the people who have threatened to take his life on more than one occasion . . . In order to escape his enemies he went over 150 miles out of his way to reach that place.

The Commonwealth’s attorney, Mr. Marris, has also been threatened with death. . . this is only a sample of the condition of affairs in that section of the State. Said one of the detectives: “A number of men have been killed by people in ambush . . . the decision of the Hatfield case probably means more trouble.”²⁹

Unlike *The Climax*, which simply stated what had occurred, the *Sun* made sure to point out how the wild “outlaws” had threatened the judge and attorney with death, and killed various others in ambush. To end it with a bang, it made sure to mention that these harrowing events were only a “sampling” of what was occurring in the area.

But while some New York newspapers were quick to stereotype and various Appalachian newspapers to defend, this wasn't always the case. The *New York Tribune* was an example of a New York paper that favored a straight-forward reporting style over the sensationalized tall tales spun by the *New York World* and *New York Sun*. Founded in 1842 by Horace Greeley, the *Tribune* under his leadership and that of his friend Whitelaw Reid, who took over the editorship after Greeley's death in 1872, had a reputation for striving to inform and teach its readers, with social and political reform being at the forefront.³⁰ Greeley was so well respected that many people refused to believe anything in the papers unless it was confirmed by "Uncle Horace."³¹ This desire to inform and educate rather than entertain can be seen in some of the *Tribune's* coverage of the feud. For example, in its January 25, 1888 issue under the heading of "The News This Morning," it simply stated, "A battle between the Hatfields and McCoys was fought in West Virginia."³² Another article published on February 12, right after the *World's* sensational "Bloody Border War" article, straightforwardly stated that "Governor Wilson today issued a requisition on Governor Buckner, of Kentucky, for twenty-eight men, who are charged with having participated in the killing of William Dempsey in Logan County . . . on the 19th of last month in a fight between the Hatfields and McCoys."³³ A third article, published on August 5, reported that "Asa Hatfield, Captain Hatfield, Elias Hatfield, and 'Tom' Mitchell . . . [had] left . . . [Kentucky] to escape arrest . . . [with] thirty Kentuckians, members of the McCoy party . . . banded together near the mouth of Peter's Creek armed with rifles, [to] openly defy arrest."³⁴

The *Evening Bulletin*, a newspaper in Maysville, Kentucky, was an example of an Appalachian newspaper that favored more sensational coverage. In its January 26, 1888

publication under the heading “Preparing for Battle,” it described the feud as a “fierce vendetta” and Logan County, West Virginia as a “sparsely settled district, entirely without railroad or telegraph facilities.” It later detailed how “a Hatfield party . . . [had] purchased \$10 worth of ammunition . . . [and that] coupled with that fact that the county judge and county attorney of Pike county [had] gone . . . in quest of arms [made it look] very much like the war [was] on in earnest, and that the wilds of West Virginia [would] ring with music.” The article ended with a punchy conclusion: “There is big fun ahead.”³⁵ This was a far cry from the *New York Tribune’s* short and concise piece, which had only been published one day before. The *Evening Bulletin* published another story entitled “Hatfields and McCoys” in its September 18, 1888 paper, in which it described the “deplorable state of affairs” in the Tug River Valley. It stated that during the last month the “West Virginians [had] raided the Kentuckians twice and . . . lost five men killed outright.” It concluded that a “total annihilation of one or the other of the factions would seem to be the only thing that [would] restore peace,” and blamed the Hatfields for all the trouble, calling them “the aggressors” and stating that “the Kentuckians only resort to arms when compelled to.”³⁶

Along with sensationalized newspaper stories in both Kentucky and New York, dime novels became another popular medium that people used to read about the feud. Because these novels were written exclusively for entertainment purposes, the stories were even more outlandish and embellished with images and language that were meant to shock more than inform.

Dime novels were published between 1845 and 1910,³⁷ with some of the most popular being *Beadle’s Dime Novels*, which were published in the 1860s by publishers

Erastus and Irwin Beadle.³⁸ In the words of J. Randolph Cox, each novel “contained a work of fiction . . . with a sensational and melodramatic plot” with a new novel being issued each week. A variety of settings were used, but some of the popular early ones were tales from the West or the wild frontier, which presented an air of danger and mystery that was not always accessible to people who lived in a more urban setting. Many of the more popular ones were published in New York, with the popular subjects including tales of the “barbaric” Hatfields and McCoys, who supposedly inspired fear in the entire Tug River Valley region.³⁹

These dime novels were not bound by the standards of “good journalism” even though that may have at one time been the intention. In the earlier days of their publishing company, Erastus Beadle entrusted the editorship of his publishing company to Orville J. Victor, who proclaimed, “The narratives must be true and accurate portrayals, in spirit, of the pioneer times” and the people with which they dealt.⁴⁰ But this sentiment changed as other dime novels began to hit newsstands and bitter rivalries ensued over sales and revenue. The goal of the day was to sell dime novels that were more about making money than accurate, truthful content.⁴¹ Erastus Beadle even said that “his strategy for dealing with rivals who published trashier novels was to ‘kill a few more indians [sic] than we used to.’”⁴²

Once entertainment became more important than the truth, stories were published strictly for entertainment value. Many contained statements and stories that were glaringly wrong, and the overall impression was that these dime novelists were writing only to sell copies of their “works.”

One of these dime novels, *The Hatfield and McCoy Outlaws: A Full and Complete History of the Deadly Feud Existing between the Hatfield and McCoy Clans*, was published in 1889 in New York by Richard K. Cox. This publication was filled with sensational writing and made-up events in the feud that never took place. One of the more outrageous statements included, “It is not an unusual thing to find in this mountain district men with two or three wives, and instances are known where one woman has lived with two or three husbands.”⁴³ This was a ridiculous statement that had no basis in historical fact, but the ridiculousness did not end there. Cox went on to compare the women to “the squaws in the Indian tribes of the West,”⁴⁴ who had no minds of their own and only concerned themselves with their husbands and domestic affairs. There was also a mention of an unnamed boy of seven, who was said to have been the son of Roseanna McCoy and lived in the McCoy homestead with his mother.⁴⁵ This was a false statement that had no basis in truth or fact. It was known that Roseanna gave birth to a daughter, who did not survive the first year. Neither did Roseanna go back to her parents’ home; since she was disowned by her father, she lived the rest of her life in the home of her Aunt Betty.

Aside from the inaccurate reporting and questionable journalistic practices, one of the most interesting aspects of the feud coverage, from a historical perspective, were the examples of yellow journalism. As was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it had been widely assumed over the years that yellow journalism got its start with Pulitzer’s and Hearst’s war over the popular comic strip character *The Yellow Kid*, as well as their fierce desire to out-sell each other during the Spanish-American War. But according to David Spencer, professor of information and media studies at the University of Western

Ontario and a scholar of yellow journalism, yellow and sensational journalism were occurring well before that. The *New York Sun* was one of the first newspapers using sensationalism in order to increase its readership. The motivation, said Spencer, was that “if you cover crime and blood, you will get an audience.”⁴⁶

But feud-era newspaper stories showed that there were numerous examples of sensational journalism showing up as early as 1888. This was significant because, as stated previously, *The Yellow Kid* was not published until 1895, and Hearst bought the *New York Journal* in that same year, which was five years after the feud had ended. It also has been readily assumed, as stated earlier, that Pulitzer only began to engage in sensational journalism after his feud with Hearst began. But this is not the case because Pulitzer was already engaging in sensational coverage as early as 1888. The signs were all there: big, multi-column headlines, lavish pictures, locator maps, rampant anonymous sources, and self-promotion.⁴⁷ An example can be found in Appendix E. It was Pulitzer’s desire to connect with the common-man that caused him to demand that his writers produce sensational stories that were simple, easy to understand, and entertaining. It was this that gave Pulitzer the affectionate nickname, “the grandfather of sensational journalism.”⁴⁸

Sensationalism carried over into the dime novels as well with some of the sentences and paragraphs in the novels copied *verbatim* from newspaper stories. Normally, this re-using of stories would not seem so unusual because it was common for publishers to re-issue stories that had been particularly popular.⁴⁹ But what made this particular example significant was the fact that it was a story that was re-used from a newspaper, not just another dime novel. Publishers would often re-use stories from their

previous works or would re-issue stories that had been discontinued from another publisher. An example of one of these newspaper stories came from a February 1888 edition of the *New York Herald*. Underneath the headline “Bloody Border War” in large, black letters and among the many maps that littered the pages, there was one passage that attempts to describe a typical Appalachian town: “The streets are full of unkempt, frouzy idlers, who slouch about like human buzzards. The very labor of drawing breath seems to tire them.”⁵⁰ That *exact* passage appeared on page twenty-nine of Cox’s novel.⁵¹ Another example was the incident of the reporter meeting with the pipe-smoking “mountain maid” on page 22 of the novel.⁵² This was another passage that appeared word-for-word in Cox’s novel. The newspaper story came out in 1888, while the novel came out in 1889, which showed the amount of influence that the sensational newspaper coverage had on other interpretations of the feud and was further evidence that sensational journalism was already occurring in this country well before the generally accepted date of 1895.

But sensational journalism did not just affect journalistic practices and journalism history, it also influenced stereotypes and the way various ethnic groups in the United States were portrayed, particularly those living in the Appalachian region. The next chapter will focus on Appalachian stereotypes and how the sensational press helped the growth and spread of those stereotypes.

Chapter 4: The Creation of the Appalachian Stereotype

At the height of the feud, the yellow press had successfully convinced American readers that the people of the Appalachian region were violent, dim-witted, barbaric, uncivilized, and extreme isolationists, among many other unflattering descriptions. These stereotypes carried over into popular culture, where they have contributed to the picture of the typical Appalachian as “culturally archaic, helplessly floundering in rural isolation, [and] seemingly in need of the blessings of modern industrial progress.”¹ Such images have become so ingrained and “normal” in the minds of many that few stop to consider where these assumptions may have come from and why they have become so readily accepted. Scholars of Appalachian stereotypes have stated that the first inklings of derogatory images of the Appalachian people began to emerge around the end of the nineteenth century, at the moment when sensational coverage of the feud was at its peak.² The outrageous newspaper stories and dime novel thrillers presented a “distorted picture: ignorant mountain riffraff, bearded brutes without background or regard for human life,”³ people who settled squabbles through the barrel of a gun rather than through logical discussion and diplomatic conversation.

But while this presents one likely reason for the origin of Appalachian stereotypes, two important questions remain: What made the stereotypes stick to the Appalachians the way they did, and why, more than one hundred years after the end of the feud, do these stereotypes still remain? Research has shown that it was a series of half-truths, sensational stories, and straight-up lies repeated over and over again that have contributed to the unflattering image of the modern Appalachian. In the words of Tom Dotson, “Legends and lies become history by sheer repetition . . . Stories written by big

city reporters after brief visits to either Logan County or Pike County have been recycled over and over again by feud writers until they now have the stamp of history on them.”⁴ It was an inaccurate “daisy chain” that started with “the early [feud] writers [citing] the yellow journalists, because they represented the oldest and nearest to the events sources. Then the writers who followed with books in succeeding years cited the earlier books, because they were then accepted as standard.”⁵ It was a circle of false and made-up stories that was manufactured and passed down as actual “history.” This included the image presented by the New York papers of a group of penniless, half-witted ruffians who settled scores with violence and bloodshed rather than through proper legal process. In journalistic terms, this would be defined as the process of “media priming.” Media priming is the process through which “media content is seen as providing a prior frame of reference (a prime) within which subsequent related content may be interpreted.”⁶ This chapter will lay out how the media’s coverage of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud went on to influence the public’s view of the Appalachian people, and how negative stereotypes of the group may have evolved over time.

The conception of the savage mountaineer feudist established by Crawford was quickly snatched up by novelists and short-story writers, who used it in their fictional accounts of Appalachian life.⁷ One of the first was John Fox Jr., who published a novel titled *A Cumberland Vendetta* only five years after the end of the feud. It’s interesting that the title of Fox’s novel is very similar to Crawford’s work, *An American Vendetta*, lending credence to the theory that Crawford was responsible for the Appalachian stereotype.⁸ A look into Fox’s novel lends even more evidence to this theory. For example, on page nine, the novel reads, “The war armed them, and brought back an

ancestral contempt for human life; it left them a heritage of lawlessness that for mutual protection made necessary the very means used by their federal forefathers.”⁹ This is very similar to Crawford’s descriptions of the Appalachian region, in which he describes that “nothing [can be] found equaling it in . . . [lawlessness], where “quarrels . . . were commonly settled with the knife or the pistol than in any other way.”¹⁰ Another passage from Fox’s novel reads, “Passing old Jasper’s store on the edge of town, he saw the old man’s bushy head through the open door, and Lewallans and Braytons crowded out on the steps and looked after him. All were armed.”¹¹ This coincides with Crawford’s description of the “most suspicious people on the face of the planet”¹² who never traveled without “a long Winchester rifle in [their] hand.”¹³

Fox also published a short story entitled “A Mountain Europa,” that Harkins stated may very well have become the model for the modern Appalachian stereotype. A “drawing accompanying . . . [the] short story . . . portrays the heroine’s father as an unkempt moonshiner leaning on his gun . . . [and] brings together all the visual tropes of the later iconic hillbilly: a surly disposition, barefeet, long scruffy beard, suspender-clad overalls, shapeless oversized felt hat, moonshine jug . . . and long-barreled rifle.”¹⁴ Since Crawford’s descriptions of the Appalachian people were most likely the inspiration for Fox’s own works, and Fox created what would come to be known as the modern “hillbilly,” then it can be assumed that the creation of the hillbilly stereotype can be traced back to Crawford, and his sensational tales surrounding the Hatfield-McCoy feud.¹⁵

This stereotype, set in motion by Crawford and perpetuated by novelists such as Fox, carried over into the turn-of-the-century where writers, who were for the most part

unfamiliar with the Appalachian region, accepted the stereotypes without question.¹⁶ A sociologist at the University of Chicago even published an article entitled “A Retarded Frontier,” in which he remarked upon the apparent isolation of the Appalachian people based on a four-day excursion and the “vivid” stories of Fox.¹⁷ Even though Fox’s stories appeared to be the result of over-hyped generalizations and false tales, and he once so offended a group of Berea College students they threatened to “tar and feather” him,¹⁸ he went on to become a respected novelist as well as *the* definitive source on mountain society in the public imagination.¹⁹

Starting in the early 1900s the Appalachian stereotype jumped to another widely received medium: the silver screen. More than four hundred films set in the “mountains” were released between 1904 and 1920, with a further seventy-six films between 1920 and 1929.²⁰ In 1914 alone, seventy such films were produced, averaging about one new film a week.²¹ The films usually included scenes of spectacular violence surrounding stories about sexual desire, conquest, and the crusade to “civilize” a backwards and barbarous region.²² Again colorful novelists, such as Fox, were the inspiration for these films, often mirroring the plots of the novels directly.²³ “Othering” the Appalachian people was proving to be a lucrative business, and with the creation of cable television those stereotypes were presented to viewers across the country.²⁴

From the mid-1950s to early 1970s, American television audiences were presented with competing portrayals of the Appalachian people, from the McCoys in *The Real McCoys*, to the Taylors in *The Andy Griffith Show*, to the Clampetts in *The Beverly Hillbillies*.²⁵ Like Fox’s novels, these light-hearted sitcoms focused on the idea of the rural Appalachian in need of civilization and modernization.²⁶ The stereotyping of

Appalachians took a darker turn in 1972 with the release of the popular film *Deliverance*, based on the popular James Dickey novel, starring Jon Voigt and Burt Reynolds.²⁷ Simply put by Todd Snyder in his 2014 book *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity*, *Deliverance* “scared the hell out of American audiences” by successfully encapsulating America’s fear of the Hillbilly – much as the yellow journalists did during the Hatfield-McCoy feud.²⁸ After *Deliverance*, portrayals of Appalachia took a turn to the horrific, with popular films such as *Silence of the Lambs*, *Mothman Prophecies*, and *Wrong Turn* introducing audiences to flesh-eating inbreds, moth-like monsters, and cross-dressing serial killers – all existing in the hills of Appalachia.²⁹

Recently, Crawford’s successful development of the Appalachian stereotype has come full circle. With the release of the popular 2012 History Channel miniseries *Hatfields & McCoys* starring Kevin Costner and Bill Paxton, there’s been a renewed interest in the feud. But like the sensational journalists before them, the miniseries put the violence surrounding the feud out of proportion, and made the whole thing look like more of a blood bath than it really was. For example, the final episode showed battles happening in rapid succession, while in reality there were years of peace between the families in which no fighting took place. It also highlighted the fighting between the two families instead of showing what feud scholars say all the fighting was really about: Devil Anse’s conflict with the Pikeville elite who were out for his lands and money.³⁰ In the words of feud scholar Altina Waller, “We are left with a tragedy allegedly set in motion by the Civil War but sustained by nothing more than ignorance, excessive family loyalty, and ‘blood lust’ resulting in unnecessary violence.”³¹ The American public is again left with the image of the violent, blood-thirsty, simple-minded Appalachian. The

success of the miniseries spawned several popular books that also all but regurgitate the tall-tales told by T.C. Crawford and the other yellow journalists. It's the retelling of tall tales and made-up stories that are responsible for the ongoing stereotyping of the Appalachian people.³² One of the popular books in question took a discredited scientific argument known as the Von Hippel thesis to explain why the people of the Tug Valley were more "hyper-violent" than others.³³ The author stated that a study performed by a Vanderbilt University doctor found that "some contemporary McCoy's suffer from a disease called Von Hippel-Lindau disease (VHL),"³⁴ which is a rare, inherited disease that can sometimes lead to violent outbursts, typically affecting only 1 in 36,000 individuals.³⁵ What isn't made clear is that this doctor only treated one modern McCoy family, yet the argument is made that the entire extended McCoy family suffered from the disease, explaining their violent tendencies.³⁶ Not only does this story of a rare genetic disease further perpetuate the stereotype of Appalachian people as inherently violent, it places them even further on the fringes of society, making them more of an "other" in the eyes of the American public.

Yet another of these popular books, Dean King's 2013 work *The Feud: The Hatfields and the McCoy's: The True Story*, showed that sensational tales told to excite an audience weren't just the invention of yellow journalists and the sensational press. The author of the book described how he traveled to the Tug Valley in the summer of 2009 accompanied by two forest rangers and his sixteen-year-old daughter.³⁷ He was, he said, "the second chronicler of the feud to be warned off with rifle shots while researching the story."³⁸ Less than a year later, he was back in the same spot with two forest rangers and his daughter once again in tow, where he said that this time he was shot at with a pistol³⁹

and “beat a hasty retreat to the riverbank.”⁴⁰ It seems a little farfetched that a man would bring his young daughter back to an area where they’d been shot at previously. Likewise, it seems hard to believe that two armed law enforcement officers would run away in broad daylight without even attempting to arrest the men shooting at them.

The author also took another tale, again a likely fabrication manufactured by the yellow journalists, and presented it as historical fact.⁴¹ This involved the attempted shooting of Randall McCoy by a Hatfield ambush squad, originally told by John Spears. In this account, a group of seven Hatfields hid in the bushes by the side of the road, waiting for Randall to return from the Pikeville courthouse so they could kill him. When the son of the local magistrate walked by, the Hatfields told him to go to the courthouse and then report to them what clothes Randall was wearing so they could easily identify him. Not only did the squad fire at the wrong men, they only managed to wound two of them. Not a single fatal shot was made.⁴² This was a level of ineptitude that simply could not be believed – these were experienced marksmen, thirty feet away from their targets, and armed with Winchester rifles. A hit squad comprised of more inept New York reporters likely would have been able to score at least *one* fatal hit.⁴³

The elaborate set-up of the murder plan was also unbelievable. Everyone knew where Randall McCoy lived, and it would have been far easier to pick him off as he went about his daily chores.⁴⁴ McCoy would have been a virtual sitting duck, the tree line went right down to his back door and it would have been easy to simply hide in the trees and shoot him as he went about his business.⁴⁵ Simply put by Dotson, the tale of an “elaborate roadside ambush for men they could have [easily] picked off at home at their leisure makes [the Hatfields] look somewhat bloodthirsty and immensely stupid.”⁴⁶ Once again,

the stereotype of the violent, dim-witted Appalachian is presented to the American public.

Even with hard evidence to refute them, these negative stereotypes have continued because self-styled “historians” have taken the yarns spun by the yellow press, re-packaged them, and sold them as “history” to an unknowing public. The stories from the New York journalists of uneducated simpletons, murderers, and violent ruffians could have easily been refuted, but that became next to impossible once they were given a place in history. But there are opportunities for future research and insight into this phenomenon, and, it is hoped, to set *real* historians on the trail of facts about the feud.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Unanswered Questions, and Future Research

The analysis of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud through the lens of contemporary dime novels and coverage by the New York press shows that yellow journalism was going on well before the years 1895 to 1898 – the years that many scholars use as the possible starting points for yellow journalism.¹ While it's difficult to say that the feud was the ultimate catalyst for the start of yellow journalism, it's still a significant find because it challenges current information about the journalistic movement, and could lead to opportunities for future research.

This thesis also found evidence that coverage of the feud very likely had a part to play in the creation of the modern Appalachian stereotype. The process began with media priming and an audience that knew next to nothing about the Appalachian region. As more and more sensational stories were printed, the more and more people began to view Appalachia through the distorted lens the media presented. The stereotyping continued as the tales told by the yellow journalists were re-packaged by historians and presented to an unknowing public as actual “history.”²

Analysis of pre-feud writings about Appalachia further reinforce the influence the media had over the public's perceptions. These writings used words such as romantic, complex, and hospitable, while simultaneously presenting the people of the region as humorous, clever, and kind – starkly different from the descriptions made by the yellow journalists.³ As this chapter will show, these positive descriptions closely mirror modern testimonials made to counteract the negative stereotypes.

While much had been written about the feud, there are various “holes” and questions in the scholarship that have been unanswered. One of those questions was the

involvement of Ellison Mounts, the only person executed for a crime committed as part of the feud. No mention of Mounts was included in the newspaper coverage until his hanging in 1890, so this begs the question: was his involvement so great that it led to his trial and execution?⁴ It seemed to not be the case, because there were others who were apparently involved just as much, if not more, than he was.⁵

The second issue concerning Mounts included the possibility that Mounts was mentally challenged.⁶ If this were true, as others made it out to be, could he have truly been involved unless someone was guiding him in what to do and say? Was someone using him as the accused “scapegoat” the entire time? If so who, and why? Who was hiding behind the countenance of a scared young man?

Another gap in the scholarship was the apparent disappearance of Randall McCoy after the close of the feud. The Hatfields, who were widely viewed as the villains of the feud, remained prominent for years and eventually built a good name for themselves in their community. But if the McCoy's were the ones being victimized during the feud, why did they all but disappear? Why would they not want to come out from the hills and make their case just as the Hatfields did?

There's one possible reason that very well could be the answer for all the “holes” that many find in the feud's history: the theory that there never was a Hatfield-McCoy feud.⁷ This is a radical idea, as it directly contradicts everything about the feud legend and what people have come to know when they think about the infamous feud. Some scholars even claim that the feud was simply an invention of the sensational press,⁸ and that much of the fighting that occurred between the years of 1882 to 1890 wasn't between the Hatfields and the McCoy's, but rather between Devil Anse Hatfield and the “Pikeville

elite” who were “intent upon getting the valuable coal land from Devil Anse Hatfield and company.”⁹ This theory states that the feud was a creation of the press, largely fueled by the Pikeville elite¹⁰ to make the Hatfields look bad, thereby increasing pressure on Devil Anse to give up the fortune in coal he was sitting on. This is a significant argument for journalism history because, if true, it challenges the popular assumption that the Spanish-American War was the first media-created war.¹¹ If true, it also adds further credence to one of the main points of this thesis: That it was the Hatfields and the McCoys that may have had a hand in the start of yellow journalism. This is a potential study that could influence American journalism history.

This theory could also potentially answer the question of why the McCoys pretty much disappeared from the record after the feud – because they were never involved in a feud with anyone to begin with.¹² The only incident where any violence between the two families occurred was with the 1882 slaying of Ellison Hatfield followed by the lynching of the three McCoy boys. But even then, that was not the part of any feud but rather the administering of “rough justice” between two families. After this one isolated incident, there was peace between the families for five years, until the Pikeville elite re-entered the scene to stir up trouble.¹³

The Pikeville elite put “Bad” Frank Phillips in charge of a forty-man posse that illegally invaded West Virginia, capturing at least three men and killing two, one of whom was Devil Anse’s uncle, Jim Vance.¹⁴ The planned New Year’s murder raid on the McCoy homestead was most likely *not* an organized plan to murder Randall McCoy and his family, but rather to *kidnap* Randall, whereby he could then be used as a bargaining chip to get Devil Anse’s own men out of the Pikeville jail and ultimately end the conflict

with little to no bloodshed.¹⁵ But the group that led the raid on the McCoy home, according to Dotson, “under the leadership of the young and emotional Cap Hatfield and the almost surely inebriated Johnse Hatfield” ended in disaster, with two of Randall McCoy’s children dead and his wife critically injured.¹⁶ The botched raid severely damaged Devil Anse’s reputation, and left him facing imprisonment, death, or continuous pressure from a large, well-financed, and well- equipped posse for the rest of his life, which was not acceptable to the Hatfield patriarch.¹⁷ He eventually sold his land to a land speculator and quietly relocated to Main Island Creek in the Guyandotte River Valley. In this version of the “feud” it didn’t end with the hanging of Ellison Mounts in 1890, it ended when Devil Anse gave up his land.¹⁸

Further analysis into the theory that there was really no feud could change current knowledge about what happened during those years from 1882 to 1890, potentially showing that the “feud” wasn’t an ongoing battle between two families, but rather a manufactured media circus caused by the sensational press and pressure from a handful of the wealthy elite. This in turn challenges the popular stereotypes that have stayed with the people of Appalachia for years – if the “feud” that ultimately started the stereotypes never really happened, it would force people to question how much of what is shown about Appalachia is really true.

It’s also interesting to note that there have been various individuals and groups throughout the years who have presented evidence in direct conflict of the wider image manufactured by the media. For example, University of Chicago sociologist George Vincent, writer of *A Retarded Frontier*, found the contrast between myth and reality to be so jarring that he acknowledged “we had heard so many stories of the ignorance of the

mountaineers that we were somewhat disappointed by their familiarity with a good many things we had not expected them to know,” and suggests that the popular images of the Appalachian people were simply stories which “[had] about them a suggestion of a newspaper origin.”¹⁹ Likewise, author Charles Dudley Warner “found it hard to reconcile the standard reports that all mountain people are ‘ignorant . . . idle, vicious, and cowardly’ with his own experience in the region of nothing but kind treatment . . . [with] little evidence of demoralization.”²⁰

There were various writers who weren’t so quick to adopt the Appalachian stereotype either, one being Cynthia Rylant, author of the 1992 Newbery Award-winning novel *Missing May*, which tells the story of a young girl being raised by her aunt and uncle in West Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains. Unlike stereotype-ridden literature that presents the people of Appalachia as simpletons, Rylant’s book portrays the people of West Virginia as a complex lot, who have a rich, cultural identity that must be deconstructed to see the complexities within.²¹ She does this through the symbolic representation of her uncle’s collection of ornate whirligigs, “The Mysteries,” “complex representations of ‘Thunderstorm,’ ‘Fire,’ ‘Love,’ ‘Dreams,’ ‘Death,’” and her Aunt May’s “Spirit.”²² This shows a deeper intellectual understanding and a desire for “an emotional and spiritual interiority based on family, love, and sense of place.”²³ This is a far cry from the stereotypes that present the people of Appalachia as simpletons with no regard for culture or internal enlightenment.²⁴

Another novelist who didn’t jump on the stereotyping bandwagon was Francis Lynde, who frequently “critiqued novelists’ eagerness to typecast the people of the southern mountains (and the rest of the South).”²⁵ In his 1896 piece *The Moonshiner*

Fact, the protagonist, an author seeking “local color”, stumbles upon a family of southern mountaineers. He immediately begins writing a tale of “bloodthirsty men and women ‘whose regard for human life was a minus quality . . . [and] to whom all strangers were ‘revenueurs’ and as such to be killed without compunction.’”²⁶ Lynde’s piece ended with the protagonist traveling heavily armed into the mountains of eastern Tennessee, where he discovered how wrong his previous perceptions were. He found the people to be “poor and ignorant and simple and primitive . . . but . . . as hospitable as the Arabs, as honest as they are simple, and as harmless as unspoiled country folk anywhere.”²⁷

Not surprisingly, people from mountain communities raised some of the strongest criticisms of the negative Appalachian stereotypes.²⁸ Ministers J.T. Wilds and J.H. Polhemus both passionately defended the Appalachian people against an 1895 address reported in the *Missionary Review of the World*, that accused “the mountain folk of carrying on murderous feuds, ‘moral looseness,’ and an utter ignorance of the outside world and Christianity.”²⁹ Wilds stated that the people of the mountains were quicker than outsiders gave them credit for, so much so that they frequently “used outsiders’ expectations of native ignorance for their own ends for they are ‘[s]ome of the keenest minds and sharpest wits . . . [and] are forever hoodwinking strangers and commenting among themselves upon the ignoramuses who come from the cities ready to believe everything they hear.’”³⁰

But while Appalachian natives and various public figures were quick to condemn the sensational press for portraying them poorly, it’s quite possible, even probable, that the people in the region had a hand in stereotyping themselves. As shown in chapter three, while the West Virginia papers favored a straight-forward reporting style and often

condemned the yellow papers for their outlandish coverage, there were various Kentucky papers that fed into the sensational coverage. Many of the sensationalized stories told to the press had no connection to the feud whatsoever but, according to Dotson, “[Perry] Cline, [Randall McCoy,] and others in Pikeville adapted the tales to Tug Valley personalities and spun them for the visiting big city newsmen.”³¹ The people of Pikeville had two big reasons for doing this: To scandalize the Hatfields, making them appear as the aggressors, and to justify the murders of Jim Vance and Bill Dempsey, laying a foundation for the defense of the Kentuckians jailed for the murders.³² But while the people of Pikeville were successful in scandalizing the Hatfields, they also, according to Dotson, “stereotyped all of Appalachia in the minds of newspaper and book readers from 1888 forward.”³³

But while the media have flooded the public consciousness with negative Appalachian stereotypes, it’s still possible to “negate” those stereotypes and replace them with more positive images that represent that group of people in a better light. The fact that negative Appalachian stereotypes are still so rampant in the public consciousness, as seen by the spate of movies and books of the late 1900s and early 2000s, would lead one to believe that that may be due to there not being enough “good” representations of Appalachian people to counteract all the “bad” ones currently out there. A recent study found that, “[P]sychological basic research shows that negation *during* reception of biased information (and not later) can reduce a treatment’s impact on implicit measure.”³⁴

As stated by Florian Arendt, “although there is evidence indicating that there is no *substantial* reduction in a *media* prime’s effect on implicit stereotypes owing to a low perceived validity . . . the aspect of whether negation during encoding of *some*

stereotypic depictions can nevertheless ‘dampen’ the media prime’s effect on implicit stereotypes is a promising research question.”³⁵ In other words, individuals will likely *not* negate stereotypes unless there is enough time, intention, and cognitive capacity to prove that the content being presented by the mass media is inherently negative and unrealistic.³⁶

This suggests an interesting study on how the general public perceives Appalachian stereotypes. While negative stereotypes are largely available, what would happen if a test group was presented with images that portray the Appalachian community in a positive light, while simultaneously being told that they should negate the negative stereotypes? Some say the results would show that “just telling individuals that they should negate may be enough to reduce [the] detrimental effect” the media had on the Appalachian image.³⁷ If such a study could be made successfully, it could provide invaluable information to those that would seek to negate the negative stereotypes that surround Appalachia, while at the same time finding a method to present Appalachia in a positive light to the American public.

In the years that the feud took place, the Hatfields, the McCoys, and the entire Appalachian population, were presented poorly in a way that was not contingent with who they were as people and the way that they lived their lives. As this study has shown, there has been some research into how the modern Appalachian stereotypes came to be and the role that the media played in their development. But before appropriate action can take place to quell the spread of negative stereotypes and derogatory images, more needs to be found on their origins. Perhaps then real change can take place, and others can see that Appalachian people are not the same individuals presented in the media but are a

fascinating group of people with a sophisticated culture, a distinct identity, and a rich heritage.

If this study has shown nothing else, it has shown the power that the media can employ when put into the hands of those who do not follow Joseph Pulitzer's motto of "Accuracy! Accuracy! Accuracy!"³⁸ Even if Pulitzer's paper itself did not always meet the standard. But if dropped into the wrong hands, a large group of people can be unfairly portrayed and have to strive continually to rebuild a reputation that never should have been shattered in the first place.

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Notes

Chapter 1

¹ Otis K. Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

² “A Fight to the Death,” *The New York World*, February 8, 1888.

³ T.C. Crawford, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States* (New York: Belford, Clarke and Company, 1889).

⁴ D.B. Hatfield, *Triumphant the Gates of Hell Cannot Have Me!* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2003), 45.

⁵ *Current Literature, Volume V.* (New York: The Current Literature Publishing, Co., 1890), 253.

⁶ The second son of Devil Anse Hatfield, widely regarded as the most dangerous member of the Hatfield family and on of the main instigators of the feud. See Crawford, *An American Vendetta*, 61.

⁷ Kimberly Heffling, “Many Stereotypes Surround Hatfield-McCoy Feud,” *The Huntington* (West Virginia) *Herald Dispatch*, June 5, 2000.

⁸ Jo Creason, “The Human Side of the Hatfields,” *The Louisville* (Kentucky) *Courier-Journal*, July 13, 1952.

⁹ These four papers were the *New York World*, *New York Tribune*, *New York Herald*, and *New York Sun*.

¹⁰ Jason Skog, *Yellow Journalism* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Compass Point Books, 2007).

¹¹ Anthony Fellow, *American Media History* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013), 157.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Skog, *Yellow Journalism*, 10.

¹⁴ Anthony Harkin, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39.

¹⁵ “Counties in Appalachia,” Appalachian Regional Commission, <http://www.arc.gov/counties> (accessed May 14, 2013).

¹⁶ R. Celeste Ray, *Highland Heritage: Scottish American in the American South* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁸ Dean King, *The Feud: The Hatfields and the McCoys: The True Story* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2013), 20-24.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ There have been debates over the years over McCoy’s first name. Some sources say “Randolph” while others say his first name was “Randall.”

²¹ Coleman C. Hatfield and Robert Y. Spence, *The Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil Anse Hatfield* (Chapmanville, West Virginia: Quarrier Press, 2003), 66.

²² Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys*, 10-11.

²³ Ibid., 12.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 54.

²⁷ Ibid., 15.

²⁸ Hatfield and Spence, *The Tale of the Devil*, 107-108.

²⁹ Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys*, 21.

³⁰ Phillip Hardy, *Kingdom of the Hollow, the Story of the Hatfields and McCoys* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Lulu.com, 2006), 37.

³¹ While it is uncertain exactly what was said that day, some speculate that Ellison made a comment to the boys about Roseanna’s failed relationship with Johnse. Others say he was wearing a straw hat and told the boys that it was “hay for their horses.” See Hatfield and Spence, *The Tale of the Devil*, 116.

³² Hatfield and Spence, *The Tale of the Devil*, 120.

³³ Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys*, 63.

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¹ Coleman C. Hatfield and Robert Y. Spence, *The Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil Anse Hatfield* (Chapmanville, West Virginia: Quarrier Press, 2003), 21.

² Ibid., 21-23.

³ Ibid., 137-43.

⁴ Otis K. Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), ix.

⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁷ Ibid., 40-41.

⁸ Anthony Fellow, *American Media History* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013), 158.

⁹ David T.Z. Mindlich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., 16-20.

¹¹ Ibid., 12.

¹² Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978), 6-8.

¹³ Jason Skog, *Yellow Journalism* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Compass Point Books, 2007), 4-7.

¹⁴ John D. Stevens, *Sensationalism and the New York Press* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 5.

¹⁵ Skog, *Yellow Journalism*, 4-7.

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¹⁸ Jessica E. Jackson. "Sensationalism in the Newsroom: Its Yellow Beginning, the Nineteenth Century Legal Transformation, and the Current Seizure of the American Press." *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics, & Public Policy* 19 (2005): 789-816.

¹⁹ These included the tale of the "Cuban Joan of Arc" Evangelina Cosío y Cisneros, Hearst's attempt to humiliate Pulitzer with the fabricated Refelipe W. Thénuz (an anagram for "We pilfer the news," and Hearst gleefully declaring "How do you like the *Journal's* War?" Upon his successful instigation of the Spanish-American War. See David Nasaw, *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst* (New York: Mariner Books, 2001), 128-134.

But while this was how sensationalism may have gotten its start, it was a movement that developed slowly and was not fully institutionalized until the 1920s. It was at that time that tabloid news developed, with journalists focusing on sensational items such as celebrity gossip, murder trials, and sex scandals. See Kathleen Morgan Drowne and Patrick Huber, *The 1920s* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2004), 189.

²⁰ "A Fight to the Death," *The New York World*, February 8, 1888.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "A Mountain Feud," *The New York Sun*, October 7, 1888.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Fawn Germer, "Are Quotes Sacred?" At <http://ajrarchive.org/article.asp?id=1340> (accessed March 29, 2016).

²⁷ Jennifer Sommer, "Writing in Dialect in Fiction: A History and Study," at <http://jennifersommer.weebly.com/jenreflecting/writing-in-dialect-in-fiction-a-history-and-study> (accessed March 29, 2016).

²⁸ Paul J. Erickson, "Judging Books by their Covers: Format, the Implied Reader, and the 'Degeneration' of the Dime Novel," *ATQ* 12 (September 1998): 2.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ This image of the stern-faced Appalachian woman was commonly seen in the dime novels and newspaper coverage of the day.

³² Richard K. Cox, *The Hatfield and McCoy Outlaws: A Full and Complete History of the Deadly Feud Existing Between the Hatfield and McCoy Clans*. (New York: Franklin Square, 1889), 7, Special Collections, folder 87-175. West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, West Virginia.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Bloody Border War,” *New York Herald*, February 7, 1888.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Hardin E. Taliaferro, *Fisher’s River (North Carolina) Scenes and Characters* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), 14-17.

³⁸ Ibid., 28-31.

³⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁴⁰ Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850), 10.

⁴¹ Ibid., 11.

⁴² Ibid., 32-52.

⁴³ T.C. Crawford, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States* (New York: Belford, Clarke and Company, 1889), 8.

⁴⁴ Tom E. Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner: Rescuing History* (North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 31.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁶ Anthony Harkin, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 57-58.

⁴⁸ Todd Snyder, *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2014), 49.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ David C. Hsuing, *Two Worlds in the Tennessee Mountains: Exploring the Origins of Appalachian Stereotypes* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 1.

⁵¹ Lanier Frush Holt, "Writing the Wrong: Can Counter-Stereotypes Offset Negative Media Messages about African Americans?" *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 90 no. 1 (January, 2013): 108-125.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Florian Arendt, "Dose-Dependent Media Priming Effects of Stereotypic Newspaper Articles on Implicit Stereotypes," *Journal of Communication* 63 (2013): 830.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 831.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 835.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 836.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 837.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Stewart Plein, "Portraits of Appalachia: The Identification of Stereotype in Publishers' Bookbindings, 1850-1915," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 15 (2009): 1-2, and Wes Davis, "The New-Old Timers," *Southwest Review* 95 (2010): 1-2.

⁶¹ Facebook, Inc. "Real Hatfield, Real McCoy, Real Matewan Facebook page." https://www.facebook.com/groups/hatfieldmmcoy/?multi_permalinks=893456440731894¬if_t=group_highlights.

Chapter 3

¹ While Hearst and Pulitzer are the names most closely associated with yellow journalism, there were others including James Gordon Bennett Jr., of the *Herald* and

Charles Dana of the *Sun*, who are considered by some to be the predecessors to the yellow journalism movement. Bennett believed that truth was stranger than fiction and thus felt no need to make up stories as the later yellow journalists did, but he had no problem using inflammatory language and provocative tactics to keep a story going. Dana preferred to cover seamier events while also printing stories that featured the common man. He also ran shamelessly, self-promoting advertisements that touted his news as the freshest, most interesting, and sprightliest around, tactics which would later be used by both Hearst and Pulitzer. See David R. Spencer, *The Yellow Journalism: The Press and American's Emergence as a World Power*, 34-37.

² Telephone interview, David Spencer, August 10, 2013. Spencer is professor of information and media studies at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada.

³ T.C. Crawford, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States* (New York: Belford, Clarke and Company, 1889), 8.

⁴ "Bloody Border War," *New York Herald*, February 7, 1888.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Crawford, *An American Vendetta*, 12.

⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁹ Tom E. Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner: Rescuing History* (North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 43.

¹⁰ Coleman C. Hatfield and Robert Y. Spence, *The Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil Anse Hatfield* (Charleston, West Virginia: Quarrier Press, 2003). 110-12.

¹¹ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 10.

¹² John R. Spears, *The Dramatic Story of a Mountain Feud: Annotated Edition (The Appalachian Heritage Series)* Vol. 5, ed. Ryan Hardesty (North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 4-5.

¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ John Spears, "Mountain Feud," *The Sun*, October 7, 1888.

¹⁷ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 235.

¹⁸ Ibid., 236.

¹⁹ While it's likely that a physical altercation did occur, it would certainly not have been to the extreme of two women being brutally beaten with a cow's tail. It's far more likely that Tom Wallace got physical with one of the women while Cap Hatfield simply restrained the other. See Tom Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 239-40.

²⁰ *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, January 25, 1888.

²¹ *Weekly Register*, February 15, 1888.

²² "Give Us Justice," *Big Sandy News*, February 16, 1888.

²³ "News Paragraphs," *The Climax*, September 12, 1888.

²⁴ There are further examples of relevant newspaper articles from the New York, West Virginia, and Kentucky newspapers on the Chronicling America website. Not all articles were used in order to allow for ease of reading and overall conciseness.

²⁵ *Big Sandy News*, July 18, 1889.

²⁶ "Murder by One of the Hatfield-McCoy Gang," *New York Sun*, July 12, 1889.

²⁷ "Various Items," *Spirit of Jefferson*, September 17, 1889.

²⁸ *The Climax*, November 20, 1889.

²⁹ "East Kentucky in Terror," *New York Sun*, November 29, 1889.

³⁰ Anthony Fellow, *American Media History* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013), 95-96.

³¹ Ibid., 96.

³² "The News This Morning," *New York Tribune*, January 25, 1888.

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- ³³ “Requisition for Twenty-Eight Men,” *New York Tribune*, February 12, 1888.
- ³⁴ “The Hatfield Ruffians Leaving West Virginia,” *New York Tribune*, August 5, 1888.
- ³⁵ “Preparing for Battle,” *Maysville Evening Bulletin*, January 28, 1888.
- ³⁶ “Hatfields and McCoys,” *Maysville Evening Bulletin*, September 18, 1888.
- ³⁷ George W. Chilcoat and Joan M. Gasperak, “The Dime Novel or How to Vitalize American Literature Classes,” *Young Adult Literature* 73 (March 1984): 100.
- ³⁸ J. Randolph Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), xiii.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Frank P. O’Brien, *The Beadle Collection of Dime Novels* (New York: New York Public Library, 1922), 5.
- ⁴¹ Paul J. Erickson, “Judging Books by their Covers: Format, the Implied Reader, and the ‘Degeneration’ of the Dime Novel,” *ATQ* 12 (September 1998): 2.
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- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
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- ⁴⁷ W. Joseph Campbell, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies* (Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2001), 7-8.
- ⁴⁸ Spencer telephone interview.
- ⁴⁹ Erickson, “Judging Books by Their Covers: 3.

⁵⁰ “Bloody Border War,” *New York Herald*, February 7, 1888.

⁵¹ Cox, *The Hatfield and McCoy Outlaws*, 29.

⁵² Ibid.

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¹ Ted Olson, *Blue Ridge Folklife* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 64.

² Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford, *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 23.

³ “Takes a Hatfield to Know One,” *The West Virginia Hillbilly*, August 24, 1974. The Hatfield-McCoy feud clipping file, The West Virginia State Archives; Charleston, West Virginia.

⁴ Tom E. Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner: Rescuing History* (North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 31.

⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 267.

⁷ Anthony Harkin, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 38-39.

⁸ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 33.

⁹ John Fox, Jr., *A Cumberland Vendetta* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895), 8.

¹⁰ Crawford, *An American Vendetta*, 13.

¹¹ Fox, *A Cumberland Vendetta*, 14.

¹² Crawford, *An American Vendetta*, 12.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Harkin, *Hillbilly*, 38-40.

¹⁵ While there's no definitive source on how many copies of *A Cumberland Vendetta* were sold, it can be inferred that it was fairly successful. Fox read parts of the story to eager audiences who didn't want to wait for the piece to be published, and future president Theodore Roosevelt wrote a letter to Fox praising the piece, calling it a "lasting and real addition to American literature." See Bill York, *John Fox, Jr., Appalachian Author* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2003), 103-104.

¹⁶ Harkin, *Hillbilly*, 38-40.

¹⁷ George E. Vincent, "A Retarded Frontier," *American Journal of Sociology* 4 (July 1898): 1-2.

¹⁸ In 1896 John Fox Jr. gave a talk to the Berea College student choir, which was comprised mainly of Appalachian students. The students were apparently so offended by Fox's "patronizing tone" and negative portrayal of mountain people that they labeled him as "anything but a gentleman" and complained heavily about his inaccurate portrayals.

¹⁹ Harkin, *Hillbilly*, 40.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Todd Snyder, *The Rhetoric of Appalachian Identity* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2014), 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Hatfields & McCoys*. Directed by Kevin Reynolds. Written by Bill Kerby, Ted Mann, and Ronald Parker. History, May 28 2012.

³¹ Altina L. Waller, “The True Story of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud,” at <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/146732> (accessed March 23, 2016).

³² Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 328.

³³ Lisa Alther, *Blood Feud* (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2012), 183.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Von Hippel-Lindau syndrome,” at ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/von-hippel-lindau-syndrome (accessed on September 24, 2015).

³⁶ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 160-161.

³⁷ Dean King, *The Feud: The Hatfields and the McCoys: The True Story* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2013), xxi.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 371.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 124.

⁴³ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 243.

⁴⁴ Spears, *The Dramatic Story of a Mountain Feud*, 22.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 247.

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¹ Anthony Fellow, *American Media History* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013), 157.

² Anthony Harkin, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 38-39.

³ See Hardin E. Taliaferro, *Fisher's River (North Carolina) Scenes and Characters* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), 14-17 and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850), 10.

⁴ Otis K. Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010). 110-114.

⁵ Rodger Lyle Brown, *Ghost Dancing on the Cracker Circuit: The Culture of Festivals in the American South* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1997). 96.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Tom E. Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner: Rescuing History* (North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 289.

¹⁰ According to Dotson, the "Pikeville elite" was comprised of John Dils, his foster sons Perry Cline and Frank Phillips, John Dils's business partner John Smith, and other members of the upper echelons of Pikeville society. See Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud After Kevin Costner*, 289.

¹¹ Edward F. Dolan, *The Spanish-American War* (Brookfield, Connecticut: Millbrook Press, 2001). 23-25.

¹² Thomas Dotson, *The Missing McCoys* (Lexington, Kentucky: Thomas Dotson, 2015).

¹³ Ibid., 275.

¹⁴ Ibid, 290.

¹⁵ Ibid, 299-300.

¹⁶ Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys*, 62-64.

¹⁷ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 311.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ George E. Vincent, "A Retarded Frontier," *American Journal of Sociology* 4 (July 1898): 16-17.

²⁰ Anthony Harkin, *Hillbilly*, 40.

²¹ Karen Roggenkap, "Seeing Inside the Mountains: Cynthia Rylant's Appalachian Literature and the 'Hillbilly' Stereotype," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 32 (2008): 192.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Harkin, *Hillbilly*, 40-41.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Dotson, *The Hatfield & McCoy Feud after Kevin Costner*, 47.

³² Ibid., 48.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Florian Arendt, "Dose-Dependent Media Priming Effects of Stereotypic Newspaper Articles on Implicit Stereotypes," *Journal of Communication* 63 (2013): 836. Emphasis in original.

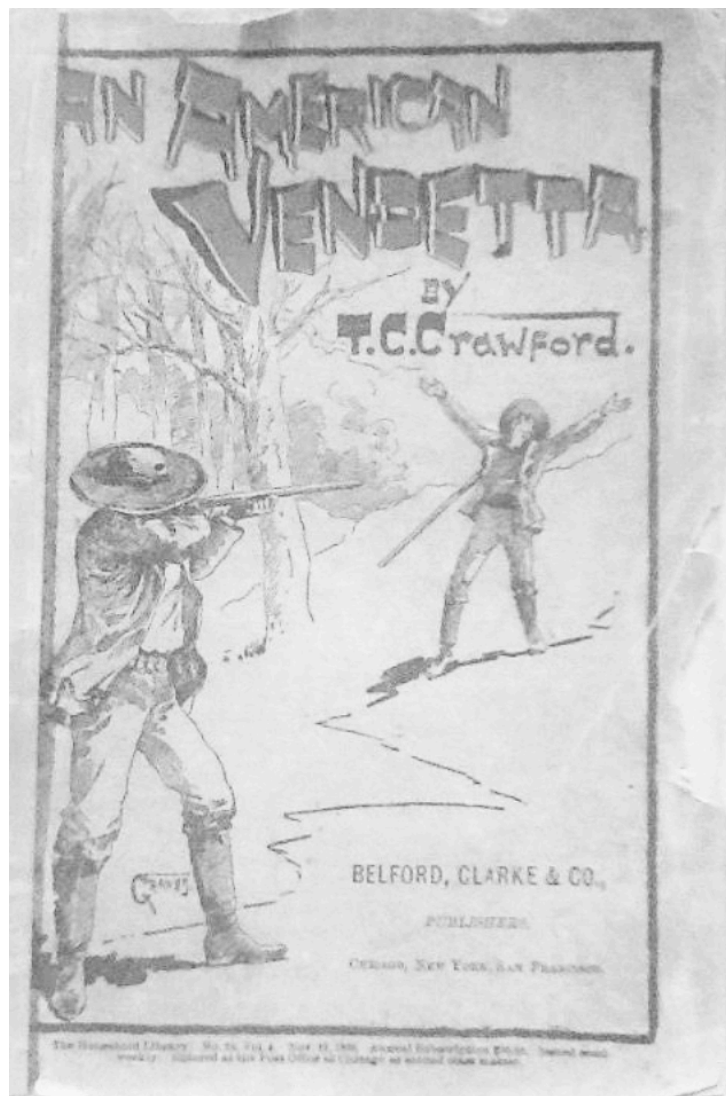
³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 837.

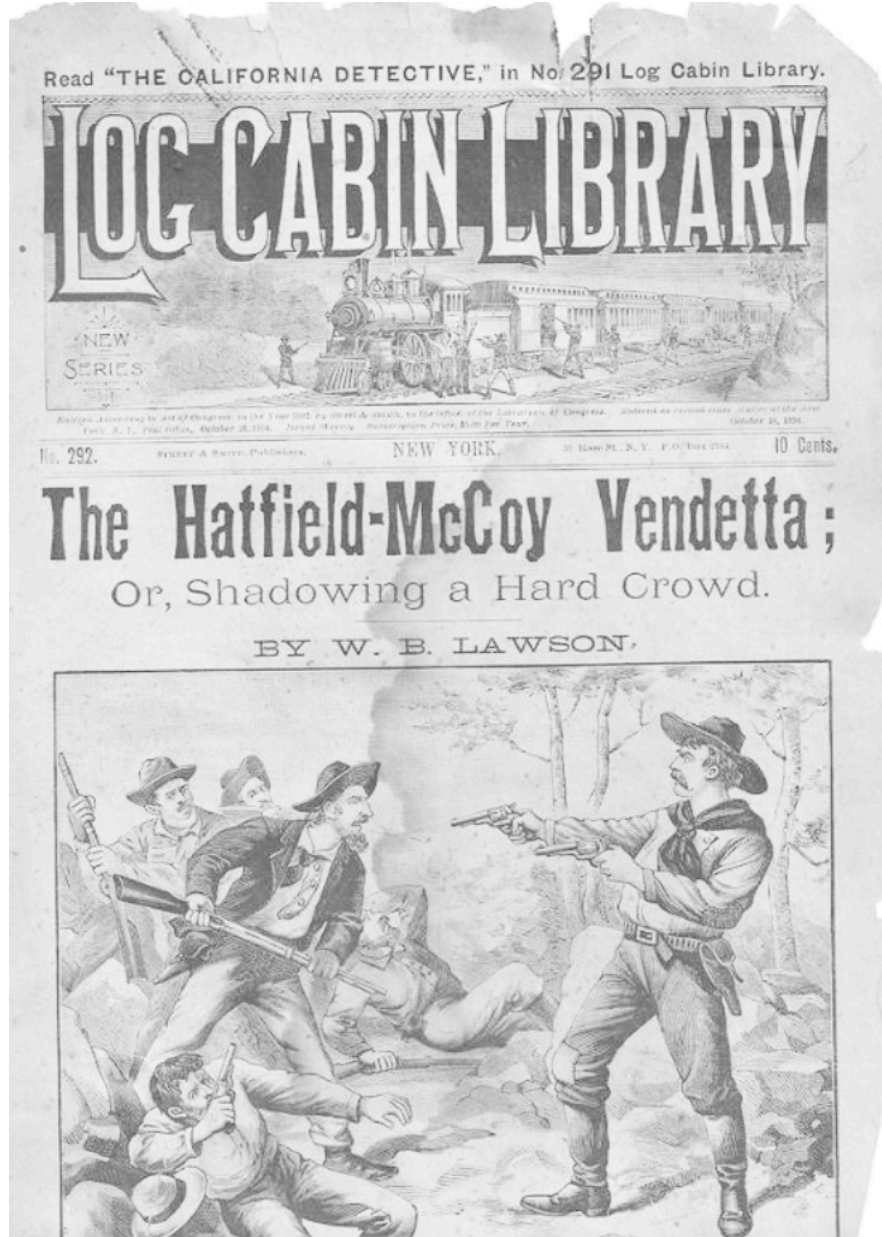
³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Alleyne Ireland, *An Adventure With Genius: Recollections of Joseph Pulitzer* (formerly *Joseph Pulitzer: Reminiscences of a Secretary*, 1914), (New York: E.P. Dalton & Company, Inc., 1920), 110.

Appendix A: Original Cover of T.C. Crawford's *An American Vendetta*



Appendix B: *The Hatfield-McCoy Vendetta* by W.B. Lawson



Appendix C: Illustrations from the New Year's Raid on the McCoy Homestead



Appendix D: Illustrations from the Works of T.C. Crawford



Appendix E: Front Page of the February 8, 1888 Issue of the Evening World

OCULAR DEMONSTRATION
The World
Prints Daily
MORE WANTS TEAN
Any Other Newspaper.
COUNT FOR YOURSELF!

PRICE ONE CENT.

A FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

Men, Women and Children Engaged in a Bloody Warfare.
The Tireless Vendetta Waged by the McCuys and Hatfields.

A "World" Correspondent Explores the Causes and Means the Cause.

A terrible history unfolded of a quarter of a century of hatred and bloodshed. Then, twenty lives have been sacrificed, and the remaining of the feud during the last few years. The feud between the Hatfields and the McCuys, which has been waged for a quarter of a century, is now being waged with renewed vigor. The feud between the Hatfields and the McCuys, which has been waged for a quarter of a century, is now being waged with renewed vigor.

THE HATFIELD-ANGEL FIGHT. A fight to the death, a fight to the death, a fight to the death. The Hatfield-angel fight, a fight to the death, a fight to the death, a fight to the death. The Hatfield-angel fight, a fight to the death, a fight to the death, a fight to the death.

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The EVENING WORLD

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1888.

THE WORLD
Greatest "Want" Medium Published.
50,009 "Wants" Printed This Year.
PRICE ONE CENT.



Illustration of a man in a suit, likely a character from the Hatfield-McCoy feud.

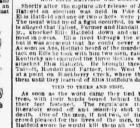


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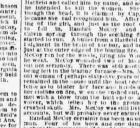


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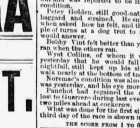


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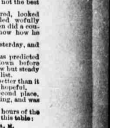


Illustration of a man in a suit, likely a character from the Hatfield-McCoy feud.

EXTRA 11 A. M. ALBERT.

Still Holding the Lead in the Garden.

Panchot, the Postman, Only a Few Miles Behind.

Britcher Comes Too Close to the Game in the Contest.

Sullivan, the Bangor Ghost, Paints on the Track.

After Panchot to the 100 Miles Track.

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