

En somme, Turcotte lance une foule d'hypothèses stimulantes. Même si on aurait préféré qu'il soit mieux étayé de données concrètes, son livre est important pour l'histoire de l'éducation et de l'évolution globale du Québec.

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Altina L. Waller — *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988. Pp. xx, 313.

Between 1878 and 1890, intermittent feuding in the Tug Valley of Kentucky and West Virginia between the Hatfield and McCoy families resulted in twelve deaths. If this was not the great feud of song and legend that transcended generations, involved whole communities and killed without regard to age or sex, it did represent a considerable increase in this Appalachian Valley's normal level of violence. Altina L. Waller does two things. First, she demolishes the myths that have grown up around the feud itself and picture the feudists as denizens of a Dogpatch world who had little to do besides go a-feudin', a-fightin' and a-fussin'. The nominal leader of the McCoys, Randolph ("Old Ranel") McCoy, was a marginal member of the community and chronic complainer who could garner little sympathy for his grievances against the Hatfields, even among other McCoys. His antagonist, Anderson ("Devil Anse") Hatfield, was no mountain n'er do well, but one of the biggest landowners in the area, who had successfully taken advantage of the growing outside demand for timber after the Civil War. Like other valley residents, he always preferred to turn to the courts rather than to reach for a gun to settle a dispute. Mountain communities had effective legal institutions and were usually quite peaceful. Secondly, Waller emphasizes the complexity of Appalachian society. Like other recent historians of the region, she rejects older interpretations that linked social disintegration and violence to isolation and economic backwardness. Instead, the mountaineers perpetuated on their small farms and in their stable communities "the yeoman-farmer republicanism enshrined in the American Revolution" (30). Not the lack of economic progress but the weakening of the material basis for the Tug Valley's traditional way of life by both external and internal forces, not least of which was the capitalistic entrepreneurialism of Devil Anse himself, made it possible, she argues, for the feud to occur.

Waller is too respectful of chronology to introduce "capitalism" as a kind of *deus ex machina* that will explain everything. The railroads and the coal mines did not arrive until the decade after the feud had ended, in 1890. The feud began twelve years earlier when, to all appearances, little had changed in the Tug Valley. In 1878, Old Ranel McCoy charged that a cousin of Devil Anse's had stolen one of his hogs. A complicated chain of events led to the murder, admittedly with provocation, by Devil Anse and about twenty others of three of Old Ranel's sons, in 1882. The murder took place on the West Virginia of the Tug where Devil Anse lived. Old Ranel, on the Kentucky side, was unable to institute extradition proceedings and the feud lay dormant for five years. Most members of the community, McCoys among them, apparently believed that a kind of rough justice had been served and that matters had been laid to rest. In fact, the changes that would give rise to the second phase of the

feud were already at work, for the post-Civil War years had witnessed the inexorable erosion of the traditional source of stability in this semi-subsistence community: land ownership. Land suitable for farming was scarce and as population grew, families could no longer provide it for most of their children. The proportion of landless households rose from 30 percent in 1850 to 50 percent in 1880. At the same time, entrepreneurs like Devil Anse moved rapidly ahead in the economic race. In a community where landownership was the basis of personal independence and respect and where a kind of rough equality of condition had prevailed, the changed circumstances could easily lead to discontent and smoldering resentments.

By 1887, when the feud's second phase began, the pace of change had quickened. Even Devil Anse had always kept his roots in traditional mountain culture. The same could not be said of a new elite, situated in the county seats, which aped the behaviour of an urban middle class and sought alliances with outside railroad and coal interests eager to develop the region. Perry Cline, a member of this elite, took advantage of an opportunity to revive Old Ranel's extradition proceedings against Devil Anse. Years earlier, Cline had lost several thousand acres of land to Devil Anse in a lawsuit. Violence erupted again. Irregular posses, attempting to kidnap the Hatfields, crossed into West Virginia and killed Devil Anse's uncle. In retaliation, the Hatfields killed two more of Old Ranel's children. Kentucky posses managed to round up nine Hatfields and supporters (not including Devil Anse) who, in 1890, were tried for and convicted of murder. The governor of West Virginia had resisted extradition and went to the Supreme Court to secure the return of the prisoners to their home state, unsuccessfully.

By the beginning of the second phase, Devil Anse's own position in the community had eroded. Changes in the state Constitution had shifted legal authority from local justices to a circuit court at the county seat where Devil Anse had less influence. He began to lose lawsuits and found himself at the mercy of creditors whose links were to the new elite. Perry Cline could pursue his own strategy of revenge partly because Devil Anse was now overtaken by the very changes he had helped set in motion. Significantly, most of the "McCoy" supporters during the second phase were Kentucky county seat allies of Cline. A family conflict had become enmeshed in a contest of economic forces which had gravely weakened a way of life even before rails and coal destroyed it forever.

Altina Waller tells her story with conviction and insight, but her characterization of the feud as "a symbol of conflicting historical forces" (185) is overdrawn. It is so because she exaggerates the strength of attitudes and values that were hostile to economic change. Devil Anse's timber business, she argues, was feared by the community as a threat to traditional values and relationships, but aside from the admittedly marginal McCoys, there is little evidence that this was the case. Economic change engulfed many, while it carried others on its crest. Devil Anse was in the latter position in the 1870s, Perry Cline in the 1880s. Even so, Devil Anse does not seem to have actually resented the newer urbanizing elite. At one time, "yeoman-farmer republicanism" may have been dominant, but its powers of resistance proved limited over time, and convincing embodiments of its virtues are hard to find among the protagonists of the feud.

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