



# Days of Darkness: The Feuds of Eastern Kentucky

*John Ed Pearce*

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## **Days of Darkness: The Feuds of Eastern Kentucky** John Ed Pearce

" Among the darkest corners of Kentucky's past are the grisly feuds that tore apart the hills of Eastern Kentucky from the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth. Now, from the tangled threads of conflicting testimony, John Ed Pearce, Kentucky's best known journalist, weaves engrossing accounts of six of the most notorious accounts to uncover what really happened and why. His story of those days of darkness brings to light new evidence, questions commonly held beliefs about the feuds, and us and long-running feuds -- those in Breathitt, Clay Harlan, Perry, Pike, and Rowan counties. What caused the feuds that left Kentucky with its lingering reputation for violence? Who were the feudists, and what forces -- social, political, financial -- hurled them at each other? Did Big Jim Howard really kill Governor William Goebel? Did Joe Eversole die trying to protect small mountain landowners from ruthless Eastern mineral exploiters? Did the Hatfield-McCoy fight start over a hog? For years, Pearce has interviewed descendants of feuding families and examined skimpy court records and often fictional newspaperpeputs to rest some of the more popular legends.

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