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Book Review - Blood in the Hills: A History of Violence in Appalachia

Mark Gatesman

Georgia Highlands College, Marietta Campus, mgatesma@highlands.edu

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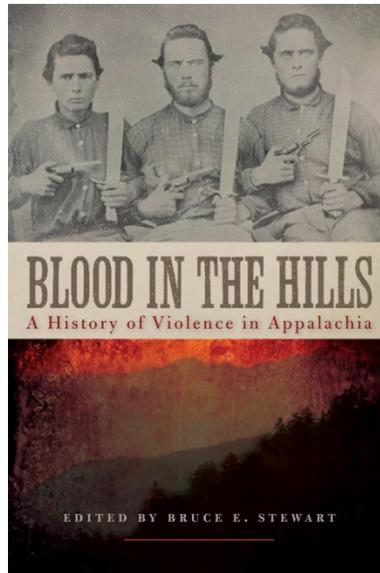
Off the SHELF

Blood in the Hills: A History of Violence in Appalachia edited by Bruce E. Stewart (University Press of Kentucky, 2012: ISBN 9780813134277, \$55.00)

The history of the Appalachian region is fraught with tales of violence, killing, and feuds. *Blood in the Hills* examines several “notorious” incidents from this history and, using them as a lens, seeks to demonstrate that the typical stereotypes of Appalachia as an inherently violent region full of drunken rednecks and hillbillies are not strictly true. Each of the thirteen chapters puts a different incident, ranging from the late 1700s all the way into the 1930s, under the microscope. The contributors examine different cultural, economic, societal, and racial motivations behind the violence, drawing from a wide variety of primary sources that help to paint a picture not only of what happened, but also of some of the contemporary cultural prejudices assigned to Appalachia.

Geographically, North Carolina and Virginia are covered in nearly half of the chapters of the

book. One such chapter covers the explosive growth of Roanoke, Virginia in 1893 in which a partially racial-based lynching occurred. What is especially remarkable about this chapter is the inclusion of a previously unpublished photograph of the lynching victim that had been sold as a souvenir at the time.



The book boasts an impressive thirty-five images, a large number of them contemporary photographs, with engravings of the major players included for incidents that pre-date photography.

Blood in the Hills is recommended for anyone studying Appalachia, especially North Carolina and Kentucky, as well as for those interested in post-Civil War violence in America. It should also be noted that the book is filled with relatively graphic descriptions of some extremely violent events.

Mark Gatesman is Reference Librarian at Georgia Highlands College, Marietta Campus