



Great Feuds in History: Ten of the Liveliest Disputes Ever

Colin Evans

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Praise for Great Feuds in History

"Everyone loves a good fight, especially on the world stage, and Evans calls these contests with skill and flair."

-- Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

"Evans captures all the drama and controversy in these streamlined accounts brimming with invigorated, well-paced prose."

-- Publishers Weekly

In *Great Feuds in History*, Colin Evans puts us in the middle of ten of history's most significant struggles-high-stakes personal conflicts that had a lasting impact on the societies around them and on generations that followed.

Spanning five hundred years of political rivalry, spiritual conflict, and ancestral discord, here are ten fascinating true tales of ambition, greed, jealousy, passion, and fear that are as gripping and meaningful today as they were in their own turbulent times.

- * Queen Elizabeth I versus Mary, Queen of Scots
- * English parliament versus King Charles I
- * Aaron Burr versus Alexander Hamilton
- * The Hatfields versus the McCoys
- * Joseph Stalin versus Leon Trotsky
- * Roald Amundsen versus Robert Scott
- * The Duchess of Windsor versus the Queen Mother
- * Bernard Law Montgomery versus George Patton
- * Lyndon B. Johnson versus Robert F. Kennedy
- * J. Edgar Hoover versus Martin Luther King Jr.

Great Feuds in History: Ten of the Liveliest Disputes Ever Details

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Evans**

From Reader Review Great Feuds in History: Ten of the Liveliest Disputes Ever for online ebook

Sesana says

This is not the sort of book that one is likely to pick up unless one is already a history buff. But a history buff will have at least a passing familiarity with the feuds mentioned here. This is more of a refresher/teaser for people looking for a little more information than anything else.

The book is divided into chapters, each covering in about twenty pages or so one of the feuds. That's actually a pretty decent amount of space to give each a fair amount of coverage. The writing is engaging enough, but it's really the events themselves that keep the pages turning. I think an author would have to try very hard indeed to write a boring version of the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys, for example.

So what's covered? We have Elizabeth I vs. Mary, Queen of Scots, Parliament vs. Charles I, Burr vs. Hamilton, Hatfields vs. McCoys, Stalin vs. Trotsky, Amundsen vs. Scott (ie, the race to the South Pole), Duchess of Windsor vs. Queen Mother (ie, the Wallis Simpson debacle), Montgomery vs. Patton, Johnson vs. Kennedy, and Hoover vs. Martin Luther King, Jr. My general level of interest in the subject determined how interested I was in the chapter. The best one, in my opinion, was the quite tense story of the race to the South Pole, with all its aftermath. But a Russian history buff (which I am not) would probably enjoy the Stalin and Trotsky chapter, provided it wasn't too much of a rehash for somebody familiar with the subject.

This is the sort of thing that's meant to be read a little at a time, by somebody highly interested in the history involved. And it does that well enough, but it's really just a teaser.

Jason Oliver says

Wonderful book. Would rate 4.5 stars if I could. Official title is Great Feuds In History Ten Struggles that Shaped the World. 10 relatively short outlines of feuds against

Queen Elizabeth I vs Queen Mary of Scots
Parliament vs King Charles I
Aaron Burr Jr vs Alexander Hamilton
Hatfields vs McCoys
Joseph Stalin vs Leon Trotsky
Roald Amundsen vs Robert F. Scot.
Wallis Simpson vs Elizabeth Windsor aka Queen Mother
Bernard Law Montgomery vs George Patton
Lyndon B. Johnson vs Robert Kennedy
J. Edgar Hoover vs Martin Luther King Jr.

I learned much, clarified even more and enjoyed the read. My only complaint is the chapters are mainly overviews of the feuds, not delving too deep but it does give credence, both positives and negatives to each side and person. Very balanced.

I also like how many of these chapters clear up some of the questions I've had reading historical fiction. A Column of Fire centers on Q. Elizabeth and Q. Mary. 20 Years after (sequel to The Three Musketeers) centers around Charles I and Cromwell. I've seen a few movies about George VI after his ascent to the throne

and this gives a good back story. Who doesn't love reading about the Kennedys? And Winter of the World includes Stalin vs Trotsky. Again, I loved it and it's a easy read.

Carol says

Great book. Short chapters, 15 - 25 pages, easy to pick up and put down. Nice, succinct pieces of history. Many details incorporated into each story without bogging down. I didn't feel the Hatfields and McCoys were as noteworthy as Stalin and Trotsky or Patton and Montgomery but perhaps included in order to sell books, a feud spoken of and I guess so well known it helped to define "feud." Would make an interesting reading club piece to debate which feuds were most noteworthy, most history changing, etc. My favorite? Perhaps Stalin and Trotsky because it is the period of history I seem to be reading alot about right now and good to understand the rise of communism in more detail beyond Lenin. My least favorite? The Hatfields and McCoys as their feud really did not add anything to the bigger world stage and it still is shrouded in much myth. Most surprising? Hoover versus Martin Luther King. I had no idea King had the skeletons in his closet that he did or that Hoover misused his power to the extent he did. It was nice to be reminded of the details of my favorite historic figures Elizabeth I and Mary of Scotland. I may look up what else this author has written.

Karen says

Eh. Amusing in some parts, but the history geek in me has to do a little nit picking. In the open chapter on Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, Evans states Mary's mother was Margaret Tudor, sister to Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father. WRONG. Mary's paternal grandmother was Margaret. Her mother was Mary of Guise, a French princess.

Other than that, this book is a good way to kill time on the train.

T. Renee says

Loved it, it made me I had a gross misunderstanding of a lot of events.

Trevar says

History is always an intriguing subject. While it is always intriguing and quite often biased, the stories that stem from it remain a fascinating facet of civilizations.

Colin Evans' book is no exception.

The tales told present a more objective view than most might expect. Rather than take the side of the English king Charles I over the English Parliament, or supporting Queen Elizabeth I over Mary Queen of Scots, or to deplore both Stalin and Trotsky, Evans works to show us the characters behind the feuds. No opinions are made to determine which might have been the better human being; instead, Evans wisely allows the reader to make their own assumptions about who we believe is in the right.

The best points:

Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots.

As a starting point for the book, a great choice. Queen Elizabeth's life is always intriguing, and to see the different sides to her conflict with Mary served as the perfect introduction to Evan's style and story.

The Duchess of Windsor and the Queen Mother

I found this section to be a delightful surprise. The interactions between King George VI's wife (the Queen Mother) and Wallis Simpson (the Duchess of Windsor), while not surprisingly frigid, were made clearer in the enthralling telling. The situations also elucidated the situations in the recent movie *The King's Speech*.

The low points:

Roald Amundsen and Robert F. Scott

Unfortunately, while a different sort of feud, it did not measure up to the colorful stories that preceded it. A race to the South Pole is not nearly as engrossing as a political battlefield, or the posturing of Montgomery and George S. Patton.

The Hatfields and the McCoys

In this section I admit to having gotten confused several times as to who was who. There are so many people involved in the Hatfield side and as many more in the McCoy's that keeping straight each and every one of them became nearly impossible.

But overall, the book serves as a balanced historical presentation, with the situations shown equally from both sides and presented in a fun style. Very enjoyable, and an intriguing page turner.

dejah_thoris says

Although some of the history wasn't new, I really enjoyed Evans' fresh presentation of historical events as the result of certain abiding feuds between strong personalities. Some were obvious inclusions for the book (Hamilton vs. Burr, Hatfields vs. McCoys, Parliament vs. Charles I) whereas others shed light on less well-known conflicts (Amundsen vs. Scott, Duchess of Windsor vs. Queen Mother). Each feud opens with highlights of each party, intended to read like the opening to a wrestling match, and each section contains a little speculation as to what would've happened had the other party won. My favorites to read were Amundsen vs. Scott (the former being quite sneaky) and the Duchess of Windsor vs. Queen Mother. (I'd never heard of the huge royal scandal in the early part of the 20th Century.) Overall, a very engaging little book that might pique someone's interest in history who doesn't normally read it.

Robin Sencenbach Ferguson says

Definitely a classified as "light" or "pop" history, "Great Feuds in History" may be somewhat light on facts and heavy in the author's opinions but is undeniably entertaining and fun to read. Colin Evans's witty if flippant writing is a delight and by turns serious and laugh-out-loud funny.

The goal of the collection is to show a number of the world's most infamous feuds and how their feuding changed the world. He isn't always successful with the latter goal in every chapter, (for example,(view

spoiler) but each vignette is tight and engaging. Some are better than others. My personal favorites were Stalin/Trotsky, Amudsen/Scott, and Duchess of Windsor/Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

Those looking for in depth history will not find it here. The format denies that kind of depth of study, and Evans's writing style prohibits it. There is no attempt of unbiased writing here. While amusing, Evans's clear opinions are sometimes off-putting. He puts J. Edgar Hoover through the ringer, without spending much time talking about his strengths, and Queen Elizabeth I is made to look like a silly, spiteful woman. It was annoying to find such bias in otherwise excellent writing.

Still, this book is not meant to be a historical treatise. It's a good introduction to different figures in history, especially ones with which I wasn't familiar. While "Great Feuds" is certainly not a monumental example of history, it has great fun in showing just how nasty, spiteful, and flat-out mean-spirited history really can be.

Sherry Sharpnack says

In the introduction, the author defined how he picked struggles that classified as a feud: the parties had to be equals, and apparently, the more deadly the disagreements, the better. The book then details ten great, historical "feuds" in chronological order.

He begins w/ Queen Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots. I see how this qualifies as a feud: a night-and-day difference between equals —until Mary was Elizabeth's prisoner for 19 years and executed upon Elizabeth's order. A couple of the feud's reached the level of vendetta, like J. Edgar Hoover's hatred of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Anyway, I re-learned some history, which is always fun for me. The writing was clear and understandable. And I got a book off the floor. #winning

Timea says

Fun book though definitely not an academic history book. The author's commentary was amusing at times, and it was interesting to read about these feuds in a narrative, story form.

Amy says

While this book made for some interesting and entertaining light reading, I have to question its accuracy. It details 10 feuds, 4 of which I had prior knowledge, 2 of which I had extensive knowledge. In those 2 I found misinformation and in all 4 I found information not reliably verified as facts treated as if they were. In general history is interesting enough without need for embellishment or sloppiness. Why invent when reality is already quite entertaining?

Erika says

I was really excited for this book but found it lacking. This book presents no new information on the feuds,

just a brief overview of events. My main issue though is that Evans definitely interjects his own -strong-opinion into each feud. If you can set aside Evans's opinions, this book is good for a quick reminder of events.

Karen Powell says

This is a book that's pretty fun and the language the author uses makes for quick reading, but borders on the gossipy rather than neutral historical reporting. The whole point of the book is to get the dirty details of the feud; a summation of "the good parts." [return][return]The choices are good for the limited number of feuds being covered, but with the exception of Martin Luther King's with Hoover, it's a white-centric list. The feuds span centuries, from Protestant Elizabeth I's struggle for the throne and religious authority over the Scottish Catholic Queen Mary, to the aforementioned Hoover-King struggle for political influence. Some feuds seem more influential than others. Was Hoover's feud with King really any more monumental than Hoover's harrassment of other famous people during his day? However, It is a fascinating read on what was going on in the backrooms of the civil rights struggle. The book shines with the tragic story of Amundsen and Scott's race to be the first to reach the South Pole. It's a tale of drama, deceit, and madness, and practically writes itself. Some chapters fall into danger of becoming too gossipy to be reliable. Elizabeth I is reduced to a jealous, looks-obsessed ninny instead of the shrewd political leader she was. [return][return]With only ten feuds, the book begs to be expanded and to include other world leaders. The author stuck to those well-known by English-speaking audiences, and on the whole is more entertaining than a reliable historical reference.

Tony Laplume says

I'm not sure who to level the criticisms I have for this book against. The author? Barnes & Nobel for having stocked it in its bargain section?

First off, and most pointedly, the title is a misnomer. It's more like, "*Great Rivalries*" or "*Great Personal Animosities*." Secondly, obviously the author is British. He gets off describing the "epic" feud between Wallis Simpson and Elizabeth Windsor (partially explored in recent Best Picture winner at the Oscars, *The King's Speech*), for instance, which is more or less paralleled in the one between LBJ and RFK a little later in the twentieth century, or expects Americans to remember Montgomery (from WWII) as well as they do Patton (they just don't).

There's nothing wrong with Evans being British, of course. But his distinct cultural slant makes for a curious book under such a general heading to have been found in a Barnes & Nobel bargain section. Or perhaps a perfect one. If you've ever browsed this section yourself, you know how the chain loves to stock it with this kind of book, something that catches the potential reader's attention without necessarily having to care about the writer (which is how a lot of books are otherwise sold, even when the subject in nonfiction is equally noteworthy).

I think the writing is good enough, and the summaries decent enough. Evans writes a lousy introduction, which is the worst you can say in that regard. Great feuds by definition will have occurred between individuals history can't help but have taken note of. There's no need to puff it up further, but it certainly explains how mundane some of his subjects really turn out to be (see above).

What's worse is how little some of them really seem to even *think* of one another, not in that they *hate* each

other, but that they didn't think of each other pretty much *at all*, such as the explorers "competing" at the South Pole (neither name has particularly resonated through history, despite this occurring only a century ago). The one who makes it there first doesn't think to assist in any real sense the other one, whom hindsight certainly screams, anyway, had a much rougher time of it (he died in the effort), ostensibly because he was so concerned about having his achievement properly acknowledged.

So I repeat, this book's greatest weakness is its stubborn intransigence to cultural bias. Which is kind of what Evans was otherwise exploring. But also, not *necessarily* the role of the *historian*...

(I apologize for concluding Evans is British in the event that he isn't. Even the Internet doesn't seem to know.)

Alyssa says

An entertaining enough bit of historical drama, but it lacked the academic distance necessary to present such a topic with any kind of authority. The author has a clear tendency to choose favorites in each of the feuds presented and to stack the data accordingly, which I find terribly unprofessional. Conclusions are leaped to without backup. Assertions are made about historical speakers' tones. The voice as well, meant to be engagingly conversational, simply comes off as overly casual.

Perhaps most disappointing, the thesis promised in the subtitle -- "struggles that shaped the world" -- was left unproven. In his biased efforts to present one clear favorite in each struggle, the author brings the ten feuds down to the level of personal bitchslapping and largely neglects to explain the larger global ramifications resulting from these struggles. And this tendency to back his favorites also prevents him from presenting the feuds as evenly as his introduction leads us to expect, as taking place between evenly-matched weight classes.

On the whole, not a book I regret having read, but also not a book I would necessarily recommend to someone looking to become educated on the subject of any of the historical figures therein described.
