"Perhaps I had taken a perverse pleasure in letting the conflict develop, knowing all along what the outcome would be."

`One senses throughout his fear of failure, which to physicians takes the form of denying death, an unwillingness to address it, and often desperate and even foolhardy actions to fend it off.'

The reader is left to wonder whether this same derring-do may have applied to his adventures with transplantation, particularly since other small images slither into later descriptions. With a skiing party in the Alps trapped in a severe snowstorm, "although they were convinced that I would not be able to make the solitary 20-mile journey back to Zermatt I arrived there at two in the afternoon." Another moment, recounted with some apparent embarrassment but nonetheless recounted, had to do with his resignation from the University of Colorado which immediately preceded his appointment in Pittsburgh: "Rumors circulated about the reasons and because there was no simple or single explanation, I said nothing. An innocent response to a journalist’s question made things worse. When someone inquired about a purported battle within the university between titans, I asked, 'Who is the other titan?'"

The fact remains that Starzl is a titan, that the battles for the technical advances in, and acceptance of, transplantation by the medical community and the public would have occurred far more slowly and far less well had he not been in the war. Like any memoir of battles, objectivity is impossible — one can only fight on one’s own side and describe the events from that point of view. Other books of the history of this drama will appear and they may read differently from this one. But, of all the combatants, Starzl is certainly the most entitled to have written the chronicle and, without question, his will be referred to whenever the topic is addressed in the future.

Readership of the book begins therefore with medical historians and it is difficult to be confident about extending the list beyond them. Patients and the families of patients? Certainly not all of them will be up to its complexities and others might find it too painful. Colleagues? Many will scan it to see how the author describes events they participated in or to smile with pleasure when he refers to them. Others will probably avoid or dismiss it since they were wounded or adversaries in the wars.

Readers of autobiographies who are fascinated by the minds of men and women who have accomplished great things? Starzl appears to be letting the reader into his soul to share his agonies about his own cardiac surgery, about family or patients, but he does so guardedly. One senses throughout his fear of failure, which to physicians takes the form of denying death, an unwillingness to address it, and often desperate and even foolhardy actions to fend it off. To a man whose vocation and avocations have all pointed to living with danger, one assumes that the struggle must be particularly acute, but he speaks of it almost formally, as though speaking of another person.

Ethicists who want to know more about how decisions were reached will certainly be disappointed. Great issues were involved at every step along Starzl’s way: Who got scarce livers and should nationality or regional residence be put in the weighing? Who should be encouraged to take what risks? Is randomization duplicitous or appropriate in the use of new drugs? Should a limit be set on the number of livers any one patient is entitled to in a world of scarcity? What role did/does affluence play in decisions about recipients?

Over time and with experience, many of the decisions, at first hap hazard, have been codified locally and nationally. But for the most part Starzl allows his beliefs to stand as the best possible choice without much elaboration.

So one must conclude that this well-written book is many very different things: a history of a dramatic medical process familiar to any TV watcher; a history of one man’s unswerving pursuit for success in it; some, but not nearly all, of the psychic struggles involved in the pursuit; histories of patients, some ending triumphantly, some tragically; documentation of the unattractive realities of medical politics. Readers with sufficient education under their belts will get something worth having from it. The question is only whether any will get everything they were seeking.

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The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel 
by Paul Krause 

MOST of us learn in school that the Homestead Lock out of 1892 was a turning point in relations between workers and management. Indeed, the only labor history I remember from high school is Homestead. Why, then, does a new book need to be published about the event?

Paul Krause’s new study makes two cases for another look. The first, less important, case is that despite many previous accounts of the lockout, virtually all are flawed. By scouring all extant sources, Krause has written what will surely be considered the definitive history of the lockout. The second, more important, claim for another perspective is
Krause’s belief that Homestead raises fundamental questions about the meaning of labor’s struggles in the late nineteenth century. In part, what sets Krause’s study apart from earlier studies is his attempt to place the lockout in a larger analytical and comparative context. Krause argues that until its workers’ defeat in 1892, and in contrast to workers’ efforts in nearby Pittsburgh, Homestead was a “prototype for a republic of labor” (p. 215).

Krause’s use of the term “republic” is far more sophisticated than simply a reference to laboring people’s participation in politics. In fact, Krause explicitly grounds his use of the term in the classical republican tradition “recast during the Renaissance by Machiavelli and subsequently embellished by British political theorists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (8). Republican ideology infused political discourse in pre-industrial America. Republicanism, as Krause uses the term, refers to the creation of a society in which laboring people would maintain the common good, uphold public needs over private desires, retain economic independence, and participate broadly in the political life of their communities. These attributes of the Homestead community are explicitly portrayed in Krause’s study as an oppositional ethic against the mill owners’ and machine politicians’ intensely private and economically acquisitive goals.

One of the dangers in using labor republicanism as an analytical framework is that it is easy to fall prey to a “good guys versus bad guys” brand of history. Krause’s book, however, largely avoids this pitfall. In two chapters, one on Andrew Carnegie and another on “Beeswax” Taylor, Krause conveys the ambiguities of the republican heritage. Carnegie struggled for over 20 years with the dilemma of how to reconcile his personal financial ambitions with his “genuine, if condescending, Christian humanitarianism” (233). The power of Carnegie’s interpretation of America’s republican traditions is evident in his popular acclaim, even when, as Krause persuasively argues, his gifts of “free” libraries in Bradford and Homestead came at the expense of steel workers’ economic independence and workplace control.

The life of “Beeswax” Taylor underscores the moral dilemma that financial acquisiveness presented to even the most committed labor republicans. Although his career vacillated between laboring and entrepreneurial pursuits, Taylor spent most of his life fighting for labor, including Homestead’s workers in the 1880s. Yet, near the end of his life, he joined the ranks of business and supported the Republican party. Krause’s chapters on the two men illustrate how difficult the choice “between an individualist and mutualist response to capitalism” (226) was for people in late nineteenth-century America.

Although Krause’s portrayal of Homestead as a “republic of labor” is among the most compelling in the historical literature, his attempt to demonstrate the inclusiveness of Homestead’s republicanism is less convincing. In his chapter on participation by East European workers and women in the city’s political and labor struggles, Krause strains to defend the ethnic and gender solidarity of Homestead’s laborers. The chapter called “Silenced Minorities” is placed just before the book’s conclusion, almost as if tacked on in second thought. Krause seems to undercut his own argument with the disclaimer that “East European and Anglo-American Homesteaders certainly did come from and live in separate worlds” (321) and with his rejection of Thomas Bell’s view of East Europeans’ political isolation before the 1930s in Out of This Furnace, which is based on Bell’s own ethnic Slovak family’s experiences as steelworkers in the Monongahela River Valley. Moreover, Krause demonstrates throughout the book that workers in Homestead, including East Europeans, were ardent racist when it came to African-Americans. Even Krause’s interesting discussion of Slovak steelworkers’ concern for “za chlebom,” literally going for bread, is difficult to reconcile with the labor republicanism of Anglo-American workers. As Bruce Laurie notes in Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America (112), republicanism was a language of native-born workers. Labor radicals after the 1840s found immigrant workforces more interested in ethnic politics than republicanism.

A larger problem with the book is the representativeness of Homestead’s story. Krause believes Homestead’s story can spur us “to rethink the meaning of labor insurgency” (11) in our own crucial time in American history. Obviously, Homestead is synonymous in most people’s minds with nineteenth century labor. But just how typical was it? Krause demonstrates that the small working-class community in Pittsburgh drifted away from republicanism in the early 1880s. Which city provides a better prism for understanding workers’ political aspirations in the late nineteenth century? This question lurks throughout the book, but is left unaddressed.

Despite these problems, Krause’s book is impressive both in its scholarship and interpretive framework. One can read the book as an excellent community study and as a challenging interpretation of labor republicanism. Krause’s study includes a comprehensive set of appendices detailing various aspects of the community as well as a very thorough bibliography. These features alone will make the book an important source for researchers for years to come.

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