



# **The Devil Himself: A Tale of Honor, Insanity, and the Birth of Modern America (New Narratives in American History)**

*Andrew Porwancher*

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Nicholas Dukes and Captain Adam Nutt were two men with much in common. Both were prominent members of Pennsylvanian society in the 1880s, both had studied law under the same mentor, and both shared an intimate connection to the beautiful Lizzie Nutt: Dukes was her debonair fiancé, Nutt her doting father. Yet Dukes soured on Lizzie during their engagement and resolved to rid himself of his betrothed. He penned a scandalous letter to Captain Nutt accusing Lizzie of sexual transgressions with no fewer than seven suitors, himself included. Such were her charms of seduction, Dukes claimed, that she "would disarm the devil himself." Nutt was not one to suffer lightly an affront to his family. He fired back, "I have always held that when a man invades the sanctity of a home, he takes his life in his hands, and under this code, I shall act." In their shared village of Uniontown, Nutt confronted Dukes in a duel that would lead to one man's death and the other's sensational murder trial. Using the Dukes-Nutt affair, the book explores the role of honor in a society hesitating at the threshold between past and future.

The **New Narratives in American History** series aims to reimagine the craft of writing history by providing compelling tales told by scholars. These brief books rely on a sustained narrative to illuminate a larger historical theme or controversy.

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