

ranging research and familiarity with the literature. There is a lot here to enrich a lecture or two. Similarly, his discussions of the role of the Society in the debate over the need for a new form of government and the ratification of the Constitution draw on solid research and present a subtle and nuanced understanding of a complex situation. Finally, his discussion of the Society's lobbying—a modern concept and word that describe their activities well—on behalf of the economic interests of former Continental Army officers is a welcome reminder that real people with needs and economic concerns fought the War for Independence.

The discussion of the second, current, Society is presented as a revival of an existing organization, when the evidence is stronger for a revival of a dormant one. While Myers provides a rich societal context for the original Society, the revived Society seems to exist in a vacuum. While he acknowledges its similarities to other hereditary, patriotic organizations, there is no discussion of how the increasing diversity of the United States due to immigration effected a new interest in hereditary connections to the founding generation and the definitions of who was a real American inherent in this. That is the one weakness of an otherwise well-done book.

Murray State University

William H. Mulligan, Jr.

James E. Crisp. *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pp. xviii, 201. Paper, \$13.00; ISBN 0-19-516350-8.

Sleuthing the Alamo is an amazing little book. James E. Crisp takes the reader behind the scenes and into the world of the revisionist historian. He shows how he found and analyzed documents, how he had to overcome his own preconceptions of what happened during the Texas Revolution, and how he had to deal with adverse public opinion. Apparently it can be dangerous to one's health to suggest that David Crockett did not go down swinging Old Betsy.

Crisp begins his saga with his own public school education in Texas history which, as it turned out, was based much more on myth than on reality. He traces his personal growth into a revisionist historian bent on finding the TRUTH, no matter what myths had to be overturned in the process. The heart of the book reveals his passion for Alamo history and his search for documents about the de la Peña diary. Discarding rumor, he finds that mistranslations have led previous historians down the wrong paths, and that edited diaries can be just as deceptive. Crisp became determined to find out what really happened at the Alamo.

His journey took him to various sources, both real and imagined. Looking at the famous paintings of the Alamo, Crisp learned that imagery often revealed racial prejudice that then influenced generations of both Texans and tourists. He includes

color plates of these pictures so the reader can also see how the participants were portrayed. Davy Crockett was always the hero and the Mexicans were always sinister savages. Hollywood played its own role in both television and movies, convincing all Americans that Crockett, whether played by John Wayne or Fess Parker, could never have surrendered or been captured. The truth, as Crisp found, was otherwise.

James Crisp narrates the real story of Texas Independence based on reliable sources, and speculates that the de la Peña account could be factual, that Crockett did surrender or was captured, and that he was executed like all the rest by Santa Anna's order. The public reaction to his version was immediate and negative. He received hate mail and death threats for daring to correct the John Wayne version of the Alamo. It seems most people want their history written in large letters, in black and white, with mythology and prejudices intact.

Crisp also addresses the story of the Yellow Rose, who supposedly kept Santa Anna busy the night before the battle of San Jacinto, which allowed the Texans to win their independence. Again the reader sees the historian at work as Crisp wades through the stories to find out what can be proved. He analyzes the race, class, and gender stereotypes that gave rise to the heroic Yellow Rose and that remained so prominent in Texas histories for so long. It turns out we cannot know if there was an Emily Morgan (or West) at that battle. If there was, she, like other women and people of color, has been erased.

This book should be mandatory reading for all Texans, for all Texas historians, and especially for all students who are learning to be historians.

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Jean A. Stuntz

David E. Kyvig. *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940: How Americans Lived Through the 'Roaring Twenties' and the Great Depression*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002, 2004. Pp. xv, 330. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 1-56663-534-5.

Only rarely are we treated to a volume that serves equally well as a resource for lecture preparation and as a required text. Most books that we keep on a handy shelf for quick reference are too narrow and technical for undergraduate or secondary school students; most texts that we choose for classroom use are too general and derivative to bother with for reference. David Kyvig's new volume fills both bills for the cultural and social history of the 1920s and 1930s. *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940* is virtually encyclopedic in its coverage of a vast array of topics, yet it manages to be readable and engaging. Kyvig ranges across changes in family demographics, religion, education, media (especially radio and the movies), leisure pursuits, courtship, labor, immigration, transportation, economics, and fashion (right down to women's underwear), paying careful attention to the differential experiences of social change