

Owen Uitenbroek

Ms. Lindsey

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David Crockett Biographies

The man, the myth, the legend. If anyone fits this phrase, it is David Crockett. Crockett was a man who was admired by many, and he is even a legendary figure in some people's eyes. Herein lies the problem with constructing a biography about David Crockett. Authors have to be able to decipher myth versus reality, which is where many children's biographers fail. The result is misinformed kids who grow up not knowing the truth about the amazing woodsman known as David Crockett. The majority of the books in St.Catherine's collection have this problem, including *Davy Crockett Young Rifleman* by Alleen Wells Parks, and *Davy Crockett an American Hero* by Tom Townsend. Some biographies address these myths and debunk them, and analyze which parts could have been true, but this is not the best approach for children's biographies because it can be confusing. This is the main problem with *Davy Crockett a Life on the Frontier* by Stephen Krensky. In the collection at St.Catherine's the best biography, which is historically accurate and concise enough for children to read, is *In Their Own Words Davy Crockett* by George Sullivan.

Starting with the worst one, *Davy Crockett Young Rifleman* by Alleen Wells Parks is the one that should have no debate whether this is historically accurate or not. It is a very entertaining book with how inaccurate it is compared to the actual history of David Crockett. It is very outdated from 1949, but even for 1949 it is historically inaccurate. It does have the main things right about his childhood, such as how he ran away from home after he got in a fight at

school. It is also very interesting. It feels more like a fictional story, and it is also written that way. One of the historical inaccuracies in this book is David's famous coon skin cap which he did not wear as often as people think. It was a hat he wore for politics and nothing more. The book has the hat in almost every picture. Also the book does not even once mention that Crockett's real name is David Crockett and not Davy Crockett. Davy was not a name he was actually called in everyday life. It was more of a stage name used for his political platform. Another issue with the book jumps from when he was a child killing his first bear to dying in the Alamo, which leaves significant portions in his personal story. When the book addresses Crockett's fight at the Alamo, the book makes it seem like he escaped in some way. Crockett was exceptional at using his resources, but there was no chance for him to survive the Alamo. The book never explicitly states that he died in the Alamo, which is a cause of confusion. Other aspects of the chapter on the Alamo are historically inaccurate. For example, not every Texan soldier wore a coonskin cap at the Alamo, and they did not wear the same hunting outfit as David Crockett. Because this book is written like a story, it is hard to tell what is fact, what is dialogue, and what is part of the story. Overall, it should be removed for its many historical inaccuracies, outdatedness, and not the most appealing to its audience.

Book number two, *Davy Crockett an American Hero* by Tom Townsend, is better, but the reason it should be removed is mainly because it is outdated and also includes multiple historical inaccuracies. It is easier to determine what is fact, and what is story. It is also written like a story book, but the main reason it should be removed from the collection is that it is outdated. Some of the facts in the book have been proven to be false or changed in years since it was written. For example, as previously mentioned, David Crockett did not always wear a coon skin cap, he also did not wear one at the Alamo. He did not escape the Alamo. The Alamo was also not the main

point in Crockett's life. Finally, the way that this biography is written does not seem appealing to any audience, not just children. The book interchanges between story and biographical writing which makes it hard to follow. It is too hard to follow for young children, or even people in high school, to read.

Book number three, *Davy Crockett a Life on the Frontier* by Stephen Krensky, is definitely the easiest one to read. It addresses some of the most famous myths and clears up misconceptions, but it has one or two historical inaccuracies, however nothing so important that the book should be removed from the library. It only has a few dates wrong, and the coon skin cap problem. The book has a majority of historical accuracies, and the only big one is the coon skin cap. It has a few dates wrong. An example of this is when it states Crockett ran away from home for six months when he actually ran away from home for two years. Overall it is a very good book for its targeted audience. It is not written like a story, the vocabulary is not too complicated, and it's written as a proper biography that is easy to follow and understand. Overall, it would have been the best book on David Crockett if it were not for those few historical inaccuracies.

Book number four, *In Their Own Words Davy Crockett* by George Sullivan, is easily the best one, mainly because all of the facts were correct. Nothing was inaccurate. It was written well, and it is structured well. The book does well to talk about not only Crockett's life as a woodsman, but his political life, married life, and military life. These topics are not dealt with in great detail, but they are touched upon in ways other children's biographies ignore. There are a few issues to consider before recommending the book, though. It is not for anyone under third grade. This book should be recommended for third grade and up, maybe only fourth grade and

up. The vocabulary used in the biography is on a level that most second graders do not possess. That is the only complaint.

St.Catherine's definitely needs to renew our collection on David Crockett. Overall it is outdated, historically inaccurate, poorly written, and unappealing to the target audience. There are only two books in St.Catherine's collection that are readable, and well structured, and one of those two books is not 100% historically accurate. This also is not the only library that has an outdated collection of children's biographies on David Crockett, but St.Catherine's can update the collection, and make it a lot better for children to learn the right things, and to be entertained.

Works Cited

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