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1

*City Man and Country Boy:
Comparing the Autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin and David Crockett*

Abstract: Public men have always attempted to control and command their public persona. My presentation will compare and contrast the lives and times and persona of Benjamin Franklin, a city man of colonial and Revolutionary times, with David Crockett, a country man of the early Republic and frontier settlement days. I will review the distinct political and social worlds of these notable men. Each was a public figure, a political candidate and attention magnate, and authored an autobiography. The importance of public image in pre-electronic days will be analyzed.

Organized societies require hierarchies. Hierarchies require leaders to guide followers. In many instances leaders are self-appointed volunteers for fame and glory. Men and women who choose to step onto the public stage usually have larger than average egos. They have practical goals to achieve in political or economic areas. Leaders may seem anointed by fate. It is clear that many leaders are appointed by their own need to be recognized and accepted. The encouragement of an MC to an audience to “*show your love*” by an audience’s applause proves this point about public life. Public speaking is regarded with fear by many people. Public attention is avoided by many people. It is a rare driven individual who volunteers for glory and fame.

E. Digby Baltzell, in his research and analysis of class power structures, declared all societies are managed by an energetic talented elite. He found all elites contained two types of people: *Aristocrats and Self-Made Men*. Taking into account people who rise in a society include men and women we will accept his point.

American society is particularly open to upward mobility. American culture has encouraged and admired upward mobility since its earliest days. My focus is on two remarkable individuals in American life: Benjamin Franklin and David Crockett. Both were Self-Made Men. Both achieved glory and fame. Both were active in the years before electronic media. They lived in an era of print media. They volunteered for glory and fame. They had political and economic goals they chose to pursue.

To establish and maintain their public image they manipulated the contemporary media by publishing an Autobiography. Ben Franklin published *Poor Richard’s Almanac* for 25 years. He became wealthy from it. Davy Crockett was the supposed author of an almanac series for 20 years. He had no financial interest in them and never profited from It except for notoriety. He was an early example of others profiting from a celebrity.

Baltzell states that a flexible system assimilates talented individuals into its upper class. This society will evolve and function with relatively little friction. Acceptance of a new person into the halls of power or as contributor to a charitable fund does not mean social acceptance is attached. Joseph Kennedy established a great family fortune, realized great political influence, yet was snubbed socially by families with older fortunes and of different religious and family histories. It has been said he was an important source of political and financial aid to Franklin Roosevelt. It has also been said Mrs. Roosevelt did not consider him or James Farley, the Postmaster General and top political strategist, to be fit for personal invitations. They were nominal Roman Catholics of Irish heritage.

Baltzell said an inflexible system shuts out the talented from other social classes. When this exclusion is done too often for too long then a revolution is likely. Leaders of Ireland's revolution and Russia's revolution and America's revolution were treated as unwanted outsiders by the upper class of their time and place. Anger which is aimed toward a revolution can be rooted in exclusion from prized social standing.

The American colonies and early Republic were, in Baltzell's words, "***a Protestant mosaic,***" (***Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia***) with few Jews or Catholics. The Protestant tradition is flexible and inventive. People re-interpret scripture, reorganize theology, establish new views and begin new faith communities. The low quality of medicine until the 1900s meant, for many, that religion was the only consistent comfort in their lives. Religious instructions and attitudes toward life have been crucial to secular behaviors. So I will discuss religious heritage of Ben Franklin and Davy Crockett.

The popular conception of Benjamin Franklin is of an elderly jocular overweight overdressed longhaired Founding Father. One biographer has said he was at the height of his powers in his 60s and 70s. He worked as a journalist and printer and public citizen from his teenaged years until his death at the age of 84. We are used to film and television characters with no "back story": their youth and influences upon their personality are unmentioned and unimportant. For Ben Franklin and Davy Crockett the youthful influences upon their personality are critical to understanding them.

Ben Franklin's father Josiah was an immigrant into Boston from Northampton County of England. Josiah Franklin was a Puritan. This group disagreed with the Church of England's practices and theology since they saw it as being too close to Roman Catholicism for comfort. Puritans tended to become Congregationalists or Presbyterians.

Josiah Franklin became a Presbyterian. Ben was raised in that faith. He was the 15th of 17 children and last of 10 sons in a financially secure home. His father constantly moralized about life. Ben accepted that habit and practiced it all of his life. The Franklin family focused on practical matters with practical solutions. Individual literal interpretation of the Bible was a theological daily practice. Self-discipline, self-examination and hard work were considered religious virtues in this tradition.

Education was prized as attainable and laudable in the Franklin home. Josiah wanted Ben to be a clergyman but family finances precluded such a lengthy education. Ben attended two years of formal schooling. His family tradition of daily reading of the Bible set the daily practice of reading every useful work. Ben Franklin was extremely well-read.

The Puritans encouraged financial achievement by means of frugality, industry and energy. Ben was noted early in life by contemporaries as early to bed and early to rise. He devoted himself to his business as an employee then as an employer.

Any reasonable understanding of Franklin's life is of as a printer in an era when printed materials were the only mass media. He was a voracious reader and a technological leader in the printing industry for his time. As an adult he became a Deist, having a generalized belief in God without holy books or set rituals, but he showed a remarkable flexibility in his outlook that all religions were, at the core, well-meaning. He showed no religious prejudice in his *Autobiography*. This attitude was remarkable in an era of English culture which featured ingrained anti-Catholicism and casual anti-Semitism. He directed his funeral was to include all clergy of all faiths in Philadelphia. All of the clergy of all the faiths in Philadelphia attended his funeral.

As an historical figure he lived at a time when his movements can be verified. He was born in Boston in 1706, moved to Philadelphia in 1723 and died in Philadelphia in 1790. He worked as a journalist and printer. He retired at age 42 from business to devote himself to civic affairs. He was known to sit up all night reading and go to work or to meetings the next day. For amusement and for possible business advantage he learned to speak and write French, Spanish and Latin. Print materials were valuable and the only source of self education in his era. He lent and borrowed books on many topics of educate himself.

His contemporaries and various biographers noted he was constantly cheerful and outgoing. Ben Franklin made friends quickly and influenced people easily. In Boston, Philadelphia, London or Paris he was known as a good friend and interesting companion. The counseling concept of being *attractive* means having a personality which people find fascinating. As a young man or an elderly man Ben Franklin was sought out for practical wisdom and amusing stories. These personality characteristics led some acquaintances to urge him to write his *Autobiography* to instruct and entertain multitudes.

He wrote the *Autobiography* in isolated bursts of creativity. The first section was written in 1771, at age 65, while on vacation. He wrote other segments in 1784, 1788 and 1790. The book ends with his experiences in the 1750s. It is the only book he wrote. His many short pieces were articles or Almanac pieces. He had hoped to write about his work in colonial and revolutionary negotiations in North America, Britain and France at different times. He hoped to write about the importance of virtue.

He was too much in demand. He was the first self-help advisor. One of his aphorisms was that time is the stuff of life so time management was central to achieving goals in life. Benjamin Franklin achieved more than most people and more than most of the Founding Fathers. Unfortunately he was not able to complete his *Autobiography* or other planned. His time was occupied with more pressing matters of the moment over and over again.

Before delving into Franklin's *Autobiography*, as well as David Crockett's, we need to define the parameters of the public persona of leaders. Public relations is the management of communication to persuade others. Establishing or maintaining an image is the goal. A public citizen, such as a social leader or political candidate, wants to gather followers. Understanding and enthusiasm and acceptance are the goals. A positive reputation is the aim and mobilizing others will result if the approach is done properly.

A leader needs to determine a constituency. It has been said a leader only steps in front of the parade to march toward the destination which the parade was already going toward. If this is the case, or if the leader truly is taking the parade in the direction of their choice, the leader must recruit members of the parade. The leader must develop an image and a rapport with the followers. Public good will is invaluable. Television and radio and the Internet are exploited for these tasks now. In the 1700s and 1800s the mass media at hand was the print media. Franklin and Crockett had to master this mass media.

Political power and influence were limited to white males of property during these eras. Interest groups and political parties are developed as conscious entities but such self interests are recognized before the formal political party or pressure group is organized. The public citizen gives the most appealing portrayal of self to likely followers. Editing one's image is fundamental. A selective focus or choice of facts is understandable. Printed material such as books must be clearly stated and will be evidence of expectations. The printed word must be carefully crafted for the leader to communicate with the followers. Persuasion is the vehicle for contact and conversion. Once a statement is printed it cannot be edited. The words must be chosen carefully for meaning and image

Political campaigns at the Presidential level routinely produce biographies of candidates. Franklin was a political power broker and occasional office holder. Crockett was a state representative and a U. S. Representative. Both used their printed life stories to justify their past actions and to promote their popularity for future endeavors.

An autobiography is understood to have been written by the subject or written in collaboration with a partner. The technology of printing and likelihood of literacy have made any form of reading popular. The life story of notable figures made biographies and autobiographies popular once printing became practical and literacy has become widespread enough for a printing industry to be established and become profitable.

Some autobiographies are based only in the subject's recollections. Benjamin Franklin's work is conversational. It seems to be written as a stream of memory. David Crockett's book is conversational but like an afternoon with an experienced story teller. Neither writer refers to public records or other printed works. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* was the first secular biography printed in the United States. It has been the model for many since then.

It was the model for David Crockett's autobiography, which is entitled *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett of the State of Tennessee. Written By Himself*. Both works inform the reader about the subject, glorify the subject, instruct about their generation and provide moral instruction for self-improvement and success. Both books are classics in the field and exemplify public relations in a pre-electronic era of public life.

Some such books are written by ghostwriters now. Both of these works were clearly the words of the author. Crockett apparently dictated his work. He stated in a letter to his son John Wesley Crockett that he edited the manuscript with his friend Thomas Chilton who wrote down his recollections. Ben clearly wrote his own book alone.

Ben Franklin's work was first published in France, in French, in 1791. It was published in English in 1793. The first segment was meant as advice for his son William. He was later estranged from William so the other sections are meant for a general readership. The later sections were written when he had free time. He was urged by at least two friends who independently asked him to write his life story for the enlightenment of "millions" and for the amusement of all readers.

Ben's book is the first self help book, the first motivational guide and the first "local boy makes good" story in American history. He was one of the most wealthy and influential Americans of his lifetime. A *Biography* television program claimed he was the most famous person in the world in his generation. He was influenced by his practical Puritan background to see his rise in the world as due to diligence and hard work. He felt God helped those who helped themselves. He made it clear in his *Almanacs* and letters and especially in his *Autobiography* that minding your business meant the business minded itself after a while. He states directly about how he was astonished at how his fortune grew then grew upon itself due to his pragmatic plans and actions.

Benjamin Franklin was known in Philadelphia as a tireless worker in other printers' shops then later in his own shop. The men of property in Philadelphia saw him at work early and late. He was a careful businessman and a skilled tradesman. These qualities brought him business. He makes it clear some competitors paid little attention to their business or to their quality of work. Benjamin Franklin names competitors who went bankrupt due to high living or careless attention to their shop. He names friends, former friends, former employers and former competitors who drank too much, borrowed too much or let their personal lives overshadow their business.

He does not directly draw a moral. His moral lesson is clear from the tale told: work hard, work smart, be honest, be reasonable. He urges the reader to put in enough days in this manner and then your reputation and fortune will be assured.

He developed and published *Poor Richard's Almanac* for 25 years. It was the base of his fame and fortune. Ben developed a character, Richard Saunders, who published the book to quiet his nagging wife's demands for more money. Ben moralized about hard work as a virtue amongst articles about weather, recipes and other practical matters.

He focused on virtue as the basis of achievement. He advised his son to adopt a plan to perfect the virtues of temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity and humility. Ben stated he kept a small book charting his progress in this quest. As a hardheaded businessman and an optimist he expected practice would make perfect. Benjamin Franklin frankly told his readers to be virtuous and steady in all things all of the time.

This book reads like a well crafted sermon. It could be the text for one of today's motivational speakers or TV preachers. Ben knew how to write plainly and to the point. He does not refer to ancient Greek or Roman texts. He writes with no quotations from any other language. He was careful that his writing was natural, positive, clear and plain. He states he always read all day on Sunday and overnight as needed. Ironically his diligence at worldly achievement precluded regular attendance at Sunday services.

Due to his skill and luck Ben Franklin is known to most Americans as one of the most interesting of the Founding Fathers. He was skillful in doing everything he could do to achieve financial and social and political success. He was lucky in living at the time when the technology of printing and likelihood of literacy made printing and publishing a reasonable path to success. Life is a matter of skill, what one can control, and luck, circumstances beyond one's control. Ben Franklin saw his opportunities and he took them. As a businessman, as a tradesman, as a diplomat he was prepared and active.

Ben Franklin's unique personality and diligence caused him to be entitled The First American by some yet damned by Robert Bly as "The First Sibling." Bly's point in his book *The Sibling Society* is American culture has no respect for expert understanding of any type, all people are considered equals without recognition of differences in abilities, aptitudes and intentions, and there is no honor for the society's elders. In some ways Franklin fits this description: he seems to have been a hail fellow well met in many situations and always interested in learning from others. He had little concern about social rank. At any rate he was a standout.

Benjamin Franklin states very clearly that much of his success is due to constant reading and questioning. He invented devices which could have been invented by anyone in his time and place. It was Franklin who invented the closed stove or the urinary catheter because he considered a need, reviewed the available technology, then applied himself to the task. The technology needed for his inventions was available to everyone in his society. He had the imagination and competence to make these inventions.

Ben gives practical advice about personal life to his son and to his readers. His off-hand advice has a proverbial ring to it. He discussed his early success as a printer by saying: *“There was a great difference in persons, and discretion did not always accompany years, nor was youth always without it.”*

When he discussed his early practice of vegetarianism he related a story of being on a becalmed ship when the passengers began fishing. He was tempted to eat fish since he had a fondness for cod. He explains the tricky nature of opinion: *“So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make reason for everything one has a mind to do.”*

His advice on the most important personal decision of life is very practical. He states his feeling for his wife Deborah was *“a great respect and affection”* for each other. Ben does not relate to any grand passion but a clear-eyed attention to workaday matters. His View connects with Judith Wallerstein’s concept of “idealization” between mates: spouses are happy if they have a high opinion of each other. He always spoke well of her.

Ben gives a sensible warning for the passions of youth: *“In the meantime, that hard-to-govern passion of youth hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expense and great inconvenience besides a continual risqué to my health by a distemper which of all things I dreaded though my great luck I escaped it.”* It is understood he had physical relationships with many women as a young man. His son William was born of an extramarital relationship with a woman he never named. Deborah Read raised William as if the baby was her own child.

Ben recounts his civic activities in educational and municipal safety areas as routine matters. He instituted or was involved in establishing the first local hospital, town watch and fire service in Philadelphia. He established the first lending library which he says is the model for all following lending libraries. Benjamin Franklin assures the reader Americans have read more than other nationalities so this practice meant Americans are ready to stand up for their rights more than other nationalities.

Ben discusses projects he had not achieved. He wanted to establish a “Party of Virtue” of hardworking intelligent men as a secret society to guide the world into practicality. He urges that the mass audience should have works which are *“useful and entertaining”* such as his Almanac and that *“industry and frugality”* are the basis of wealth and virtue.

Ben mentions his development of the American business practice of franchising. He bankrolled an apprentice to become a printer in South Carolina. Their agreement was a written contract with all likely contingencies covered. Benjamin Franklin received payments for several years into the future. His hardheaded Presbyterian faith in the written word required a complete contract between business partners even between two men of solid acquaintance. As a businessman focused upon order and profit, he abhorred Enmity and conflict. He bankrolled various apprentices in business in various cities, he and always advised scrupulous business practices to ensure success.

Ben was a public man during a century of conflicts so he was drawn into military matters. Most Americans do not think of him as a soldier but he did some military service. Philadelphia was undefended due to Quaker beliefs about peace between peoples. He Realized the French and Indians were serious threats so he urged fortification. A militia was formed. He was offered the post of colonel but he declined it due to his lack of experience. Ben Franklin stood guard as a private in turn with the other militia men.

He mentions his experience of organizing teams of horses and wagons and teamsters for the British expedition to secure Pittsburgh. He found the British General Braddock to be too dismissive of colonials and too impressed with his Regulars. Braddock and his expedition were wiped out by an Indian ambush. Benjamin Franklin is clear that insults and abuse will sadly pay one back in many ways.

Benjamin Franklin ends his *Autobiography* with information about a stint as an administrative officer in a militia unit. He supervised a construction unit which built forts on the frontier. He timed the felling of logs and erection of walls to determine the most efficient way to build the forts. Ben stated the men argued when idled by rainstorms but worked in good cheer when busy with the project. He describes the religious life of the Moravians, a minority communal sect, without prejudice. He gives only factual observations about them. He was now chosen as Colonel by acclamation and accepted the honor as an acknowledgement of his new experience.

The book ends at roughly 1757. His tone is friendly and direct. Benjamin Franklin established his public persona for all time as a Founding Father and a friendly Uncle.

David Crockett was born in 1786 in an area of North Carolina known as *The State of Franklin*. He was the son of parents who were children of poor Irish Protestant immigrants from County Donegal in Northern Ireland into North America. He died in 1836 at the Alamo as a private soldier. David Crockett was a State Representative in Tennessee, a United States Representative for his district in Tennessee, and a possible Presidential candidate. In private life he was a cattle drover, a hunter who supplied his family's needs and for market demand and a social leader of frontier settlers. He volunteered to fight in an Indian war to defend the lives of settlers. When his unit was short on food he volunteered to hunt game for his brothers-in-arms.

David Crockett was briefly considered as a likely Presidential candidate but events deprived him of that opportunity. He was nationally famous by the time he dictated his *Narrative*. A play had been written about a fictional character, Colonel Nimrod Wildfire, who was modeled after him. An interesting moment occurred in 1834 when he attended a performance of the play, *Lion of the West*. He and the star actor exchanged bows in front of the packed house. A standing ovation came from the audience before the play began.

In life he was known as “David.” He was called “Davy” as a familiarity but always signed his name with his formal given name. He has been slandered as being illiterate. This is untrue since his diary was found in the trunk of the Mexican General Castrillion after the victory of the Texas Revolution at San Jacinto. He dictated his autobiography to Thomas Chilton only for the sake of efficiency.

David Crockett moralized in his interviews and writings. He said his motto was “*Be always sure you are right, then go ahead.*” He could be plainspoken, especially when addressing a crowd of voters as one of them, and he could be florid in the fashion of the day for public men, when addressing the Tennessee Legislature or the United State Congress. To familiars he made a remark of practical wisdom: “*Let your tongue speak what your heart thinks.*” When he was addressing a room of his fellow elected officials he could make complicated statements such as: “*I would rather be beaten and be a man than to be elected and be a little puppy dog. I have always supported measures and principles and not men. I have acted fearless and independent and I never will regret my course. I would rather be politically buried than to be hypocritically immortalized.*”

He always identified himself and his first wife as “Irish.” His family and numerous other Irish Protestants emigrated to North America, and later the United States, because of harsh British laws which treated all Irish who were not Anglicans as disenfranchised citizens. The British government extended property and political rights to non-Anglican Protestants in the 1790s only after a rebellion supported by Catholics and Protestants was suppressed at great cost. The colonial power wanted to divide to continue its power.

Some people such as Grady McWhinney in *Cracker Culture* and James Webb in *Born Fighting* refer to this group as “Scotch Irish.” This term is only used in America to identify Irish people of Protestant faith. The term became popular in the 1840s as ship after ship of Famine immigrants then economic refugees of the Irish Catholic group landed in the United States. As Andrew Greeley observed in *That Most Distressful Nation* the Famine Irish were the most hated immigrant ethnic group in American history until the mass emigration of Puerto Ricans to the U. S. mainland. Colonel Crockett and his cohort said they were “Irish” with no qualifications about it. Andrew Jackson was also the son of poor Northern Irish Protestant immigrants. He called himself “Irish” for all of his life. Class distinctions established and maintained this new ethnic border.

David Crockett was raised in a backwoods area with few amenities. McWhinney noted the Irish Gaelic word *craic* (which has been translated as “joking”, “conversing” or “fun”) is the root of the American term *cracker* and the concept of *cracking jokes*. The religious institutions of Crackers have always been flexible.

Denominational lines were permeable for these Irish. Moving from one congregation to another or one Protestant denomination to another has always been in line with egalitarian attitudes of Irish Protestants. The religious requirements of Cracker piety are acceptance of Jesus as personal savior, baptism and contrition for one’s sins. Involved religious rituals are not central nor is regular attendance at services. This religious convention is very useful for a traveling people such as frontiersmen who often moved to several localities in a lifetime. David Crockett makes no mention of religious identity. He would have been raised within this practical flexible religious tradition.

He was the fifth son of his parents in a rough time and place. His father operated a tavern. David worked there in various capacities and as a cattle drover for his father. He dictated his *Narrative* in the fall and early winter of 1833. It was published in 1834. He has official authorship of other books. This is one he surely wrote although by dictation. He was a U. S. Congressman of international fame, thanks to a chance meeting with DeTocqueville, who misperceived him as an illiterate lout. The enmity of President Jackson toward Representative Crockett certainly colored the Frenchman’s viewpoint.

Numerous contemporaries left accounts of David Crockett as the most interesting story teller and drinking companion of their experience. Once he became famous due to newspaper articles, the play about him, and his own writing and stump speeches, he crafted a folksy character to play in public situations. David Crockett was known to tell Tall tales of bear hunting, exploring and frontier life at any time to anyone. The *Narrative* clearly extends his character into the future and for all time. While Ben Franklin gave his reader lessons in morals, David Crockett gave intriguing entertainment.

David Crockett mentions in his book that if he is called upon to be President he will do so with honor and duty. He was the social and political leader of the frontiersmen in the nation’s mind from the print media of his day. The nation was growing in its urban centers so the men of the woods were an intriguing anomaly to the native or immigrant in the city. Men in the countryside were moving westward and southward in search of new land holdings in a society and economy which valued land more than money. Owning a farm or ranch held more status than owning a store in the 1800s. Male interest in strength and cunning combined to make this character interesting. As Franklin was a man of action as a businessman and technological leader, Crockett was a man of adventure who explored Tennessee and Texas as a settler and hunter and citizen soldier. Crockett died as a citizen of the Republic of Texas and informal leader of volunteers in the Texas Revolution at age 49.

As a celebrity he was exploited by others. A theatre owner in New York published an advertisement that Representative Crockett would attend a performance in that theatre. He was on the book tour for his *Narrative* and exhausted from traveling. He roused himself and made an appearance to satisfy the curiosity of the audience. Many of them were voters so it was in his best interest as it was an act of kindness not to disappoint.

The Congressman had been famous since his lifetime. Other media extended his notoriety. *The Davy Crockett Almanacs* were published from the 1830s into the 1850s. A later play, *Davy Crockett*, was performed from 1884 until 1896 when the lead actor, Frank Mayo, died. Films about him have been made since 1912. These films usually involve the siege of The Alamo. The films which feature Davy Crockett in the lead role or a supporting role number at least twenty in the silent and sound eras. Walt Disney's series of three television films about Davy Crockett in the 1950s revived his legend for that generation. These films were spliced together then released into theatres later.

David Crockett was a shrewd man who knew a book would extend his fame and possibly increase his fortunes. He always represented himself as a man of the people, rather than a Tory Reformer, an upper class person willing to hold public office.

His memoirs shaped his future. He made a book tour of East Coast population centers when Congress was in session. He lost the next election for his House seat. He told his constituents *"You can go to hell, for I will go to Texas."* He and many other Tennesseans saw Texas as the future of their fortunes. He hoped to revive his political career since Texas was expected to join the United States soon. His finances were always shaky so he hoped to become rich as a land agent for later emigrants.

He entered the Alamo in February of 1836 and never left it. He was trapped there. It is unquestioned that he died there. He may have gone there to avoid Sam Houston. Houston was understood to be Andrew Jackson's man in Texas. Crockett was a political opponent of Jackson so he may have wanted to avoid that political connection. If he had survived the Alamo siege then Crockett would have been a national hero either in the Republic of Texas or the United States. That status would be very useful as a politician running for office or for a land dealer selling lots to newcomers. It is understood he was popular and energetic as a defender. Travis, the commander, mentioned him in a dispatch as invigorating the men to discharge their duty. He was old enough to be the father of many defenders so he was probably very inspiring as well as glamorous due to his fame.

He has been reported as a captive or to have surrendered but this is unlikely. Various sources tell various stories about his end. Mrs. Susanna Dickinson, who survived the assault, stated several times over several decades that he died in front of the chapel. She was escorted from her hiding place by a humane Mexican officer before the fighting was over. When she emerged with the dozen or so women and children who survived the first corpse she saw was David Crockett.

They had had many conversations during the thirteen day siege so she knew him well. He told her of nightmares from his military days during the Creek War of 1813. He saw a longhouse filled with Indians burn to the ground where all inside perished.

Some Mexican accounts vary widely about the end of other notables in The Alamo. Although Joe, the slave of William Barret Travis, testified that Travis died in the first few minutes of fighting a few Mexicans claimed to have captured him. These sources claimed Travis conversed with Santa Anna and even tried to bribe his way out of the situation.

James Bowie was bedridden with tuberculosis or typhoid for most of the siege. Madame Candelaria, his nurse, stated repeatedly over the next few decades that he died in his sickroom. There are various stories about him being delirious and helpless while he was bayoneted to death by a handful of Mexican troopers. Some stories claim he roused himself to make one last stand before being shot down then bayoneted. However at least one Mexican trooper claimed he escorted a captured Bowie to have a conversation with Santa Anna. In both of these cases there is little reason to believe these accounts as either mistaken or frankly mendacious.

David Crockett is not only the only person unlikely to have been capture at The Alamo, but he is the first person I can name with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He told Mrs. Dickinson he would never be cornered. It is understood he urged Travis to abandon the fort to conduct an Irish guerrilla war against the Mexicans. Crockett said he would fight to the death in the open to Mrs. Dickinson. Some Mexican sources mentioned one man, sometimes a handful of men, who stood in front of the stone chapel, cursing in adequate Spanish, and firing until overwhelmed by superior numbers. There is strong reason to believe David Crockett was either that one man or one of their number.

Enrique Esparza, who was eight years old at the time, reported he saw David Crockett lying dead in front of the chapel when he left his hiding place with Mrs. Dickinson. He was old enough to have reason and be able to identify adults.

Eulalia Yorba, a local girl who entered the Alamo with a local priest, saw Crockett. He was lying dead soon after the combat ended in front of the chapel. He could not have been captured at that moment, lying dead near a stone room, and talking to Santa Anna. She counted at least eighteen dead Mexican troopers in front of him.

Travis' slave Joe stated more than once he saw Crockett dead in front of the chapel with a few of his men. Joe stated he counted twenty-one dead Mexicans in front of them.

Some Mexican reports claim a tall red faced white haired man was found cowering in the stone chapel. He identified himself as Crockett. David Crockett was always reported as being slightly taller than average, pale skinned and having brown hair gives every reason to believe this person was an opportunist trying to take advantage of David Crockett's fame in an attempt to escape execution. A handful of defenders were captured then executed. Many believe that Colonel Crockett was one of them but too many facts dispute this understanding.

David Crockett was the most famous American in the Alamo amongst the Americans. He was unknown to even General Santa Anna who had to be informed of his fame by Santa Anna's American chef who had known Crockett in Washington D. C. This chef knew Representative Crockett in Washington a few years earlier. He stated Santa Anna asked to have Crockett's body pointed out to him. The chef walked the dictator to the area in front of the stone chapel. These details point to him being dead before any mopping up action was taken by the Mexicans. He could not have been dead in front of the chapel if he had been captured and awaiting execution in the center of the enclosure

This prisoner who has been said to have said he was David Crockett is supposed to have tried to talk his way out of the Alamo by claiming he was only traveling in the area and trapped by chance. Coming from a culture focused on bravery and completely disparaging of cowardice David Crockett is unlikely to have do so.

Ironically enough his death extended his career as a celebrity in print. Before he left for Texas he had dictated a book about his travels on the East Coast. His publisher, Matthew Carey of Philadelphia, had a local writer forge a chapter about Texas to add to the book so it would sell. This bogus chapter had supposed notations about the Mexicans coming over the walls of the Alamo as a last entry. This book was considered to be authentic until 1884 when an expert was able to prove its complete lack of authenticity. In the meantime

David Crockett's character was confirmed for years to that book's many readers.

Much attention has been made of the "de la Pena letter" which supposedly says Crockett was captured, interrogated, tortured then executed without ceremony by the Mexicans. This idea is interesting. William Groneman in his book *David Crockett: Hero of the Common Man (2005)* is apparently the only writer who has examined the source material. In this book he discusses the documents supposedly left by Lieutenant de la Pena of Santa Anna's staff. It is of note that de la Pena was generally considered to be an untrustworthy careerist by his contemporaries. When you consider any information you must consider the source.

Groneman reports the sheaf of papers numbers eighty-two pages. Seventy-nine of these pages are 12.5 by 8.5 inches which are folded in half. The single page which describes Colonel Crockett's execution is one of three single-sheets of 6 and 1/8 by 8 and 1/2 inches. This collection of pages has more than one handwriting. That page is apparently an afterthought. There is no clear authenticity to it. This document must be regarded with skepticism. Once again the written word is crucial to this reputation.

Benjamin Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He gave us a clear understanding of his view of the world. David Crockett was of the next generation. He represented American expansion after the days of the Founding Fathers. Both men had good reasons to make themselves and their virtues known. Both men did their best to establish good public relations with anyone who could read their writing or hear it read to them. Before the term "public relations" was coined they both practiced it well.

They were self-made men. These energetic strivers have always been welcomed into American life and celebrated for their efforts. Benjamin Franklin and David Crockett saw their opportunities and they took them.

In a culture with only print as its mass media materials both Benjamin Franklin and David Crockett, from different eras and different regions and different traditions, were able to establish and maintain distinct public persona. They helped shape America.

End of Presentation

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