



Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution (New Narratives in American History)

By James E. Crisp

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In *Sleuthing the Alamo*, historian James E. Crisp draws back the curtain on years of mythmaking to reveal some surprising truths about the Texas Revolution--truths that are often obscured by both racism and political correctness. This engaging first-person account of historical detective work illuminates the methods of the serious historian who searches for the more complex truths behind the glorious myths.

Beginning with a personal prologue recalling both the pride and the prejudices that he encountered in the Texas of his youth, Crisp illustrates how he discovered documents that have been distorted, censored, and ignored. In four chapters focusing on specific documentary "finds," he uncovers the clues that led to these archival discoveries. Along the way, the cast of characters expands to include: a prominent historian who tried to walk away from his first book; an unlikely teenaged "speechwriter" for General Sam Houston; three eyewitnesses to the death of Davy Crockett at the Alamo; a desperate inmate of Mexico City's Inquisition Prison, whose scribbled memoir of the war in Texas is now listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records*; and the stealthy slasher of the most famous historical painting in Texas. In his afterword, Crisp explores the evidence behind the mythic "Yellow Rose of Texas" and examines some of the powerful forces at work in silencing the voices from the past that we most need to hear today. An indispensable resource for anyone interested in the Alamo or historical detective work, *Sleuthing the Alamo* is also ideal for undergraduate courses in historical methodology, southwestern borderlands, the American West, Texas history, American expansion, Mexican-American history, race relations, and Southern history.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Jim Crisp takes us on an intriguing and fascinating historical adventure, bringing his inquiring intellect to bear on such tried and true topics as Sam Houston, racism and the Texas Revolution, the de la Peña diary, and David Crockett's death. Weaving this complex historical narrative into a wide-ranging discussion of cultural change in Texas over more than a century and a half, Crisp shows us how little we know about such familiar events and personalities and suggests challenging implications for his new findings." --Ron Tyler, *Texas State Historical Association*,

"Rarely has a historian uncovered such fabulous mysteries, worked so tenaciously to solve them, or told of his pursuits with such clarity and grace. *Sleuthing the Alamo* is as absorbing as the best fictional detective stories, but it is true!"--David J. Weber, author of *The Mexican Frontier* and other award-winning books on southwestern America

"Just when we thought that there was nothing new to say about the Alamo and the Texas Revolution, along comes James Crisp. These essays, based on painstaking research, remind us that that even the most intensely-studied historical topic can still yield new secrets if the historian is willing to dig deeply enough."--Gregg Cantrell, *Texas Christian University*

"Far more than a tour de force of Texas history, Crisp's narrative is eloquent, sophisticated and totally engrossing. It is a superb example of how to practice history, as well as a must-read for all Americans interested in the significance of race and culture in our past and present."--Linda K. Salvucci, *Trinity University*

About the Author

James Crisp is at North Carolina State University.

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