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For Immediate Release

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In the Footsteps of Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier

Much of what we think we know about Davy Crockett is not true.

He was not “born on a mountaintop in Tennessee.” His birthplace was in a valley next to the Nolichucky River that technically was part of North Carolina when Crockett was born.

He was not called “Davy” but “David.” He did not “grin” a bear out of a tree, nor did he kill one when he was only three.

But he by-God could have if he had wanted to.

Crockett was a legend in his own time, a man whose true-to-life heroism was no match for the larger-than-life tales that sprang up around him.

The new book *In the Footsteps of Davy Crockett* by Randell Jones follows the man, not the myth, in his journeys across early America.

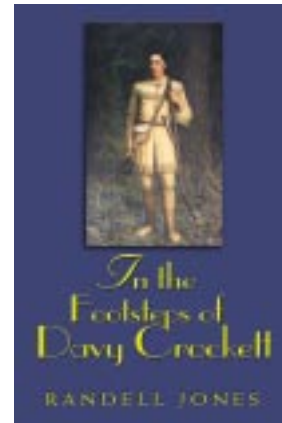
“*In the Footsteps of Davy Crockett*,” Jones writes, “puts Crockett’s life on the landscape and enables those who appreciate American history and heritage to touch his life across the centuries.”

Separating the historical from the legendary Crockett begins with his name. “By convention among scholars of Crockett’s life, the nickname Davy is most often used as a reference to the mythologized, comic, super-human persona created by 19th-century publishers,” Jones writes. “This book is about David Crockett the historical figure.”

In the Footsteps of Davy Crockett follows Crockett from his birth in 1786 near what is now Greeneville, Tennessee, to 49 sites in 10 states and the District of Columbia, culminating in his death at the Alamo in 1836.

Jones says Crockett is primarily associated with the Volunteer State, and rightly so, “but a host of other episodes from his life took him from Tennessee not only to Alabama, Florida, Washington, D.C., and Texas, but to North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Arkansas as well.”

Though his father paid for him to go to school, the young Crockett argued with his teacher and stopped going. His father’s anger caused David to run away



from home, hiring himself out as a drover through Virginia and Maryland. He ventured as far as the Atlantic, which he almost decided to cross as a cabin boy.

In his subsequent careers as bear hunter, marksman, scout, soldier, and politician, Crockett had many adventures that were more prosaic than the tall tales later attached to his name, but more exciting than the average life, and reflective of the expanding country that Crockett lived in.

“Crockett’s America was changing rapidly,” Jones writes. “He was changing with it. Crockett was a controversial national celebrity in his own lifetime, but he was not elevated to hero status until after his death.”

Randell Jones is a past president of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association, a historical reenactor, and a storyteller who has performed at the National Storytelling Festival. He has been a consultant for the National Park Service and the tourism departments of both North and South Carolina. His previous books include *In the Footsteps of Daniel Boone*. He lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Title: *In the Footsteps of Davy Crockett*

Author: Randell Jones

Price: \$15.95 trade paperback

ISBN: 0-89587-324-9

Specifications: 5½ x 8½, 186 pages, b&w photos, appendix, index, bibliography

Publication Date: March 2006

Subject: Travel/History