

Three Roads to the Alamo: The Lives and Fortunes of David Crockett, James Bowie, and William Barret Travis

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Based on his exhaustive research and unprecedented access to archives in Mexico, a historian strips away the myths surrounding Davey Crockett, Jim Bowie, William Travis, and the Alamo to reveal their role in the development of the West. National ad/promo. Ever since the day in March 1836 when an obscure Spanish mission in Texas fell to Mexican forces led by President Santa Anna, Americans have been exhorted to "remember the Alamo." And remember it we do--primarily as the place where American folk legends Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Travis met their end fighting for Texas independence. Though it is primarily the Alamo we remember today, the battle itself takes up just a few pages of William C. Davis's *Three Roads to the Alamo*; Davis is far more interested in what brought three such disparate men as Crockett, Bowie, and Travis to Texas in the first place than in how they died there. As any schoolchild knows, Davy Crockett was the "king of the wild frontier," a bona fide folk hero in his own time who rode his legend to political office first in Tennessee and then as a United States congressman. Bowie was both less well known and less heroic--a land speculator not above resorting to fraud and forgery to get what he wanted, while William Travis, the youngest of the three, brought little but potential with him to Texas.

Davis does a good job of illuminating both the personalities of his subjects and the situation in which they found themselves in Texas. He thoroughly explores the lives of these three men--their successes, their failures, their hopes for the future--and lays out the arguments for and against Texan independence from Mexico in which they found themselves embroiled. By the time Crockett, Bowie, and Travis finally arrive at the Alamo, it seems the inevitable conclusion to the roads they each have been traveling over the course of their lifetimes. *Three Roads to the Alamo* is a fine piece of historical research and an entertaining read, as well.

William C. Davis is the author or editor of thirty-five books on the civil war and southern history, most recently *A Way Through the Wilderness*, "A Government of Our Own": *The Making of a Confederacy*, and the prizewinning biography *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour*. For many years a magazine publisher, Davis now divides his time between writing and consulting for book publishers and television.

Other Books

Discovering Texas History. The most comprehensive and up-to-date guide to Texas historiography of the past quarter-century, this volume of original essays will be an invaluable resource and definitive reference for teachers, students, and researchers of Texas history. Conceived as a follow-up to the award-winning *A Guide to the History of Texas* (1988), *Discovering Texas History* focuses on the major trends in the study of Texas history since 1990. In two sections, arranged topically and chronologically, some of the most prominent authors in the field survey the major works and most significant interpretations in the historical literature. Topical essays take up historical themes ranging from Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and women in Texas to European immigrant history; literature, the visual arts, and music in the state; and urban and military history. Chronological essays cover the full span of Texas historiography from the Spanish era through the Civil War, to the Progressive Era and World Wars I and II, and finally to the early twenty-first century. Critical commentary on particular books and articles is the unifying purpose of these contributions, whose authors focus on analyzing and summarizing the subjects that have captured the attention of professional historians in recent years. Together the essays gathered here will constitute the standard reference on

Texas historiography for years to come, guiding readers and researchers to future, ever deeper discoveries in the history of Texas.

❓ ❓ ❓ ❓ ❓ . William C. Davis, *Three Roads to the Alamo: The Lives and Fortunes of David Crockett, James Bowie, and William Barret Travis* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998); R. Bruce Winters, *Sacrificed at the Alamo: Tragedy and Triumph in the Texas ...*"