



Extended History of Collection M-026 – Crockett, David (Davy)

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1.0 David (Davy) Crockett (1786-1836) was a 19th century American folk hero, frontiersman, soldier and politician. He is commonly referred to in popular culture by the epithet "*King of the Wild Frontier*".

Crockett grew up in East Tennessee, where he gained a reputation for hunting and storytelling. After being made a colonel in the militia, In 1821 he was elected to the Tennessee state legislature. He was known for using folksy rhetoric and personal narratives that appealed to the voters. One such claim was his ability to "*whip his weight in wildcats, jump up higher, fall down lower, and drink more liquors than any man in the state*" to the delight of most of his audience.

In 1826, Crockett was elected to the U.S. Congress as a Jacksonian although he had opposed the Jackson party on many occasions in Tennessee. As a Congressman, Crockett supported the rights of squatters, who were barred from buying land in the West without already owning property. He also joined in opposition to **President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act**. His opposition caused his defeat when he ran for re-election in 1830, however, he won when he ran again in 1832. His anti-Jackson opposition again led to defeat in 1834. This caused him to depart for Texas shortly thereafter. In early 1836, Crockett took part in the Texas Revolution and was killed at the *Battle of the Alamo* in March of that year. Crockett became famous in his own lifetime for larger-than-life exploits popularized by stage plays and almanacs. After his death, he continued to be credited with acts of mythical proportion.

This letter, of December, 1828 by Crockett, was written one month after Jackson was elected to the Presidency. He would have been in the process of taking over the federal administration from **John Quincy Adams**. Since the *Spoils System* was in effect, multitudes of office seekers and their supporters would have been soliciting Jackson for positions in the federal government. This was the case for Crockett's request.

No reference was found to this particular **George W. McLean**, the subject of this letter.

2.0 Purser, US Navy - A person whose duty it is to take care of the ship's finances and books, in which a record of everything on board is inserted. An act of congress concerning the naval establishment, passed March 30, 1812, provided that; "*pursers in the US Navy shall be appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Every purser, before entering upon the duties of his office, shall give bond, with two or more sufficient sureties, in the penalty of ten thousand dollars, conditioned faithfully to perform all the duties of purser in the United States.*"



3.0 Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) was the 7th President of the United States (1829-1837). Based in frontier Tennessee, Jackson was a politician and army general who defeated the Creek Indians at the *Battle of Horseshoe Bend* (1814), and the British at the *Battle of New Orleans* (1815). He was a polarizing figure who dominated the party system in the 1820's and 1830's. As president he dismantled the 2nd Bank of the United States and initiated forced relocation of Native American tribes from the Southeast to west of the Mississippi River. He created the modern Democratic Party. The 1830-1850 period later became known as the era of *Jacksonian Democracy*. Jackson was nicknamed "*Old Hickory*" because of his toughness and aggressive personality. He fought in duels and was a wealthy slaveholder. He fought politically against what he denounced as a closed, undemocratic aristocracy, which appealed to the common citizens. He expanded the spoils system during his presidency. Elected president in 1828, Jackson supported a small and limited federal government. He strengthened the power of the presidency, which he saw as spokesman for the entire population, as opposed to a Congressmen's specific small district. He was supportive of states' rights, but during the *Nullification Crisis*, declared that states do not have the right to nullify federal laws. Historians acknowledge his protection of popular democracy and individual liberty for United States citizens, but criticize him for his support for slavery and for his role in Indian removal.