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Essay Response: With Santa Anna in Texas

James E. Crisp is a phenomenal historian whose dedication to the history of Texas is only surmounted by his dedication to providing his readers with the truth to the best of his ability. The most important parts of James’ research findings are, in my opinion, the consistency in utilizing multiple, often conflicting and both contemporary and primary, sources and judging them for validity before utilization resulting in authenticating the de la Pena diary. I argue that his research contributes to the study of Texas history by displaying staggering depth and detail, which has been groundbreaking in how we look at Texas and the many events that have occurred before, during, and after its founding as the state in the union that we know it as today.

The importance of James’ research findings can be seen in his analysis of many historian’s findings and contemporaries recordings of Santa Anna’s march to crush the Texan rebels. James’ analyzed the diary of de la Pena provided by Carmen Perry’s pivotal translation of the manuscript, as well as further analysis by others like Bill Groneman’s “Defense of a Legend” that opposed its authenticity. James’ admitted to Groneman’s valid point that, “…any narrative containing the reference could not have existed, much less have been published, in 1836” to which James would cross country and refer to at least four sources to solve this minute discrepancy for the benefit of history, finding it to be a mistranslation from the original text (SLEUTH pg74-97). The attention to the seemingly unceremonious details and his determination to not permit and discrepancy to lie during his research into the history of Texas found us the best contemporary source of information regarding Santa Anna’s despicable acts in Texas, the history of Texas’ revolution, and the fate of Davy Crockett.

James proves the importance of his contributions to the study of Texas history when during his, “...27 years of following Herman Ehrenberg's footsteps…” during his information seeking within the pages of an otherwise unknown memoir from a German soldier during the Texas revolution (INSIDE pgXVII). His dedication to all aspects of Texas’ history was proven further by covering the Battle of San Jacinto, “…in recognition of their outstanding contributions toward building greater public awareness and scholarship concerning the Battle of San Jacinto” recognized by the Southern Historical Association who presented him with the ‘Heroes of San Jacinto’ award on April 8, 2017 (JACINTO pg764 par3). An award from what is regarded as one of the most rigorous and convivial professional associations in the United States for his efforts in Texas’ history demonstrates the authenticity and importance of James’ efforts.

In conclusion, the examples I have provided prove to me, and the Southern Historical Association, that James’ research findings and contributions to Texas’ history are of absolute importance. His attention to detail and determination to find the answer to any discrepancy that is found by either himself, or by another historian, is by far the greatest of James Crisp’s findings as well as the exoneration of the de la Pena diary, providing us a pivotal contemporary source for understanding the history of Texas.

Works Cited

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