

DAVID CROCKETT IN COLUMBIA

By William Frederic Worner

In the proceedings of the Lancaster County Historical Society for December, 1923, there is a brief article relative to the eccentric frontiersman and congressman, Colonel David Crockett. In that paper I referred to Crockett's visit to Lancaster city, which occurred on the evening of Sunday, July 6th, 1834. Since preparing that sketch, an old issue of the Columbia Spy has come to my attention, in which, under date of Saturday, July 12th, 1834, I find an all too meager account of Crockett's presence in the borough of Columbia for a short time on the same evening. I am quoting the account in full, as it describes in better words than mine what transpired on that long-ago evening in the little town of Columbia in connection with this famous character:

'On Sunday evening last [July 6th, 1834] Col. David Crockett, the universally known Tennessean, passed through Columbia in the Rail Road Cars on his way from Philadelphia, where he had spent the fourth inst., to the far west. He was invited to remain a day or two among us, but declined on account of his desire to reach home, from which he had been absent eight months. He said that he had spoken himself hoarse in Philadelphia, having made three addresses on the national anniversary in that city. Being persuaded to get out and take a social glass, by some of those who were present and gazing at the 'lion,' he gave as a toast, after his usual style:

"'God bless you, for I can't.'

"He talked warmly on politics, and did not seem pleased with the Jackson men of Lancaster, for putting up a hickory pole. He went 'ahead,' after a delay of fifteen minutes, and leaving persons who expected to see a wild man of the woods, clothed in a hunting shirt and covered with hair, a good deal surprised at having viewed a respectable looking personage, dressed decently and wearing his locks much after the fashion of our plain German farmers."

In "Poulson's American Daily Advertiser" of Monday, July 7th, 1834, (no paper having been published on the 5th and 6th) is an account over a half column in length, of the Fourth of July celebration held in Philadelphia. We learn from it that "it was a proud day for the Whigs of Philadelphia. Our city was honored with the company of many of the most distinguished members of both Houses of Congress, and with some of our State Legislature. . . . A loud call was then made for the Hon. Daniel Webster, to which the champion of the constitution promptly responded with his accustomed eloquence. The following Honorable gentlemen were then successively appealed to, namely, Poindexter, Ewing, Mangum, Robbins, Crockett and Denny, all of whom gratified an admiring audience."

Some four hundred persons partook of the dinner which followed. "The President [Joseph R. Ingersoll] now announced a complimentary toast in honoring Col. Crockett. The Hon. Member from Tennessee promptly presented himself before his delighted auditors, and in his usual unaffected and good-humored manner, contributed to the gratification of the day. It is devoutly to be wished that every original friend of Gen. Jackson was as honest as Col. Crockett, and that he would abandon the President, when he abandons those patriotic principles which he once avowed."

The paper states that the company at dinner "for respectability of character and unanimity of sentiment, might truly vie with any other collection of persons assembled on a similar occasion through the Union."

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