

CASTLE DOUGLAS

A KEY LOCATION in the #GoCrocketteering Literary Tourism Trails.

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There are many connections with Castle Douglas in Crockett's novels and stories, but it is fictionalised as Cairn Edward, so today many people are unaware of this fact. While born at Little Duchrae, Crockett lived in Cotton Street, Castle Douglas from 1867 until 1876 with his maternal grandparents.

He attended Cowper's School in Cotton Street during these years. The family also attended the Free Kirk (now the Church of Scotland) on King Street, which he called 'the Kirk on the hill'.

Across a range of his novels and short stories, Crockett mentions the people and places in Castle Douglas and these have been recorded in: *'Fact and Fiction: A virtual tour of Crockett's Castle Douglas'* by Cally Phillips of the Galloway Raiders. Crockett writes of the Fair, Market, Railway, Mills and much more as well as many of the Castle Douglas 'worthies' of days gone by.

The links between Crockett and Castle Douglas are many, and in this 160th year of his birth and the 120th anniversary of his novel set partly in the town, *Kit Kennedy*, there's never been a better time to explore the connections between the man and the town - in fact and/or fiction.



S. J. Crockett.

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Crockett writes about the town in *Raiderland* (1904) :

'Castle-Douglas, which I knew as a village, has grown into the 'emporium' from which the most part of Galloway supplies itself. Its position makes it a natural centre for the traveller. It has the advantages, as well as the disadvantages of prosperity. It is neat, clean—a proper town, in every sense. The houses wear a smiling aspect. They know that they are well built and able to bring in good money to the fortunate owners. The shops, though nowadays garish, have the look of steady-paying customers and excellent connections. The churches are large, well filled, well manned, advancing, zealous in all good works, and, as of old—well able to speak out their opinions of each other.

But in spite of all I love the village that was, even more than the prosperity that is. Still, however, there are links with the past—my old minister, my old Sunday School teacher (neither yet old in years), a companion or two looking out from shop-doors at which I used to see their fathers and uncles. But once outside the clean bright little town, always busked like a bride—there the world is as I knew it.'

You can buy all Crockett's Galloway based novels in paperback or ebook and if you take part in #GoCrocketteering you can get free ebooks, in exchange for taking #SlateSelfies.

Find out more at The Galloway Raiders website:

www.gallowayraiders.co.uk