

## Crockett Timeline for May 1894.

On Tuesday 1st May Crockett wrote to Unwin from Penicuik:

*Penicuik*

*May 1<sup>st</sup> 1894*

*Dear Unwin,*

*Confound the fellow. I sent him his cheque the same day you gave me yours. I sent him his cheque the same day you gave me yours. I have written him to the bank to see if he has asked for it. It is in any case my funeral. He did another drawing. It may be then [ ] I sent a letter from decent Denholm Young who is quite another spirit - wants to get his chance and show what he can do - pay [ ] if worthy, when he does another book, I think we might get him to do the initials wanting [ ] or [ ] these easy terms.*

*By the way I have a drawing of Arthur Thomson's 'Frabawke's husband) which must go in. It was given me by the artist for the purpose. I shall send it in a day or two, along with some other things.*

*Splendid weather,*

*Ever yours*

*SRC*

*PS our literary lions (pocket size) are dining me as a newly acknowledged lion of doubtful pedigree tonight, ie I am a guest of the Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club for the years. They think no small potatoes of themselves.*

On Wednesday 2nd May 'The Scotsman' published a report on the event:

*The Rev S.R.Crockett, the author of 'The Stickit Minister,' 'The Raiders' etc, was the guest of the Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club at its monthly dinner held last night in the Waterloo Hotel. There was a large attendance of members. The menu was a work of art, containing as it did pictures of scenes from Mr Crockett's two books by W.D. M'Kay, RSA; W.G. Stevenson ARSA and R.B. Nisbet ARSA; a portrait of Mr Crockett and a poem on 'The Raiders' by Mr A. Anderson, 'Surfaceman.' Professor Masson, in proposing the toast of the evening said that those who had read the 'Stickit Minister' would remember it as a book of great and varied and remarkable power. But there had been a sequel to that, in which Mr Crockett had tasked his invention, his knowledge of Scottish scenery, character, history, and humour in a more continuous way in the form of 'The Raiders' (Applause). To have written two such books was a great thing for one man to have done. But what might to interest the Pen and Pencil Club more particularly was the demonstration that was thereby given, that the capacities of their little Scotland to yield literary effect and literary novelty were not yet exhausted. (Applause.) In this connection, Professor Masson recalled the name of Sir Walter Scott, and later those of Mr W. Alexander (the author of 'Johnnie Gibb') Mr Robert Louis Stevenson, Mr Barrie and Mr Crockett, from the last mentioned of whom he hoped they might see further productions like what his genius had already given them. Quoting a motto in 'The Raiders' 'Mind a' that ye see, but forget a' that folk say about ye,' Professor Masson expressed the hope that Mr Crockett might be true to that sentiment; that he would forget criticism for good or for bad, and give him his impressions of 'a that he sees,' caring not a rap what anybody said. (Applause.)*

*Mr Crockett, who was very cordially received, said in reply that he never thought to hear the well-beloved voice of his dear old Professor say the very kind things that he had said about him and his little productions. What everyone felt*

*who had ever been a student of Professor Masson was, that he perhaps more than any man set the golden key to the door of literature for them, and opened it that they might pass in (Applause.) A superior English critic had said that Scotland was only the knuckle end of England. He thought Mr Barrie and Mr Stevenson were showing that such was not the case, that there was a place for Scottish fiction all the world over, and that all the stories were not told yet. (Applause.) It was only a year since he (Mr Crockett) published his first little book. He thought it was far too great an honour for him, to be asked there that night because after all, in a year a man doing his best could not do much. Still, he felt that their asking him there would be a great encouragement for him to do something worthy of Scotland and worthy of the kind words that had been spoken of him. (Applause.) He should endeavour to follow the advice that Professor Masson had given him. He felt that he had some stories to tell yet - (applause) - and he should try his best to tell them in an interesting manner. He never could write about 'problems'. There were a great many literary persons of distinction, chiefly ladies (laughter) who had a great many problems his about their person. (Laughter.) For himself he could only tell a plain tale in his own way. (Applause.) In a few humorous sentences Mr Crockett gave the company some of his earlier literary experiences - how he had once been art critic for a paper in the south and how he had published a book of poems which nobody ever read. He assured them that though he was not a rich man, he would give a certain sum to all persons who would destroy any copies of that book. (Laughter.) Before sitting down, Mr Crockett again thanked the Club for the honour they had done him. The rest of the evening was spent in a social way.*

Much of May was taken up with business, especially regarding *Mad Sir Uchtred*. It was published serially in March - April, and then in novel form in July of that year. It sparked a lot of cries about 'plagiarism'. For more information see MAD SIR UCHTRED125 [HERE](#)

Between Monday May 7th and Sunday 13th Crockett was at St Andrews. (We might assume he came home to preach on the Sunday - but this is my assumption unconfirmed at this point.) Anyway, he was back home on Monday May 14th, writing from Bank House (though they didn't officially move out of Free Kirk Manse till 20th) to Unwin, and on May 15th to Ashcroft Noble whom he had recently met as this letter shows:

*Bank House*

*May 15<sup>th</sup> 1894*

*Dear Mr Ashcroft Noble*

*Ever since I met you at Norman's a month ago I have been meaning to write to you to tell you how great a pleasure it was to meet you. Often in the depths of the country where my tastes and circumstances have kept me, have I been cheered and aided by your wise true hearted large-spirited essays.*

*I always find in your work 'breaths of a serener air' and like to read all you write even when I disagree - as sometimes - though very rarely, I do.*

*But what I wanted to say was this. I would like to send you a copy of *The Raiders* if you have not one already, or if you have - why then my next book.*

*You can never know why joy your first article in the Chronicle 'A new Scottish Master' brought to this house. It brought tears to my wifes eyes for the Scottish papers had pooh- poohed the thing.*

*Let me tell you that if ever you are within a hundred miles of Penicuik there is a warm welcome for you there.*

*Barrie is coming in July, Lang in Sept, could you not come sometime and look in on a pair of quiet folks?*

*I shoot this at a venture. I don't even know your address but ask Unwin to find it.*

*With kind regards in which a grateful wife joins*

*Believe me*

*Yours very truly*

SRC

The moving date from The Manse to Bank House was set for 20th May (a Sunday). Crockett's biggest concern seemed to be his library as his letter of May 18th to William Brown shows:

*May 18<sup>th</sup>*

*My dear Brown,*

*I make bold to ask a very big thing – now prepare – take a long breath – look pleasant a little more to the light – There!!!*

*Could you possibly spare me the council, company, assistance, advice and presence of my friend Hay on Monday and maybe (now, please retain your pleasant expression) one or two days further on in the week to put my library in order. I am getting a porter to do the heavy part but Hay would be an infinite treasure and my library would be a joy for ever. If he could come on Monday we could go over and select what I could spare that would be of use to you.*

*Then the men could take the buiks down, pack them, and take the shelves down to Bank House. Then on Thurs or Friday (or both) perhaps he could come and superintend the putting in their places.*

*I have to be in the South hunting records presbyterial etc and I go on Tuesday for ten days and if he could do it my mind would be easy and we could arrange through you for honorarium.*

*Try like a good chap and I promise you an autographed set of my WORKS! as they come out.*

*No word of faithful contending.*

*Still a sweet smile*

*Yes! Noble Man!! (picture of smiling face)*

*Thank you, that will do*

*Ever*

SRC

*This is like Effectual calling. Hay has no voice in the matter.*

So the plan was that on Monday 21st they would go over what needed to be done together, then Crockett would leave on Tuesday 22nd for Galloway. While he was away, the men would set up his library in Bank House.

Crockett wrote a humorous poem to Brown:

*To William Brown at his house in Edinburg*

*It fell about the Whitsun tide  
That Brown did send his Hay  
He came to put the buiks to richts  
All on a Monanday*

*Right guid it was of Hay to come;  
Twas better still of Brown,  
And merrier night than Cro-qu-ett  
Was not in any town*

*He oped his jaws; fu' lood he leuch  
He also cracked his thumbs;  
'The best buik shelves in all the land –  
I'll have – you, bet, by Gum\*!  
SRC*

*\*an unknown divinity invoked freely in these parts.*

A letter written on Monday 21st suggests he was still in Penicuik. His intention was to travel to Galloway on Tuesday 22nd.

*Bank House*

*May 21<sup>st</sup> 1894*

*Private*

*Dear Mr Sands,*

*I have your kind letter. I am however quite sure that we would not care for a volume of stories at 3/6 – 5/- being the 'Stickit' price, and we are quite satisfied with the sale and success of that.*

*I don't of course know what Mr Watt will ask (I do not interfere, but I had a visit from another new publisher and given his offers, I am sure that nothing less than 3200 on a Royalty of 23% on a 5/- book will have much chance.*

*'Sweetheart' we might make a 3/6 book perhaps if you cared for her on something like the terms offered.*

*As I told you I cannot hope to write much new for some time beside what I have in hand.*

*With kind regards*

*Faithfully yours*

*SRC*

Crockett was certainly in Kirkcudbright on Friday May 25th as he wrote to the Macmillans at Glenhead, asking to stay the following week. He anticipates leaving Galloway on Saturday 1st June (so that he can go to Edinburgh to preach for Dr Whyte on Sunday 2nd)

*Selkirk Arms Hotel*

*Kirkcudbright*

*May 25<sup>th</sup> 1894.*

*My dear Friends,*

*Gin I come on ye at any time o' the nicht or day next week, ye'll gie me a shakedown, will ye no?*

*I'm on the hunt for stuff for a new buickie an' it's likely that I may turn up at Glenhead about Tuesday or Wednesday, likely Tuesday. I'll hae to gang awa' again on Saturday to get the train at Newton Stewart about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, for I maun be hame.*

*I'm no sure whatna road I'll come yet, but it will be ower the hills maybe frae Dalmellington, maybe frae Barr and maybe frae Carsphairn – but Glenhead is my mark in ony case.*

*I hae askit papers an letters to be sent to you, so gin ony turn up they can just bide till I come for them.*

*With all regard and anticipation*

*Ever truly your friend*

SRC

*Ps. I'm going awa' to preach in Dr Whytes in Enbra on Sabbath.*

You may remember that Dr Whyte was the dedicatee of *The Raiders*, as well as being the best friend, from childhood, of J.M.Barrie's older brother Alexander.

Crockett spent the rest of the month in Galloway, returning to Penicuik for 2<sup>nd</sup> June as planned. He would be working on *Men of the Moss Hags* as well as *Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills* and Glenhead was inspiration for both of these works.