

**HENRY M. STANLEY: THE STORY
OF HIS LIFE FROM HIS
BIRTH IN 1841 TO HIS DISCOVERY
OF LIVINGSTONE, 1871**

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Henry M. Stanley: the story of his life from his birth in 1841 to his discovery of Livingstone, 1871
by Cadwalader Rowlands

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THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

FROM

HIS BIRTH IN 1841 TO HIS DISCOVERY OF
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BY

CADWALADER ROWLANDS.



Portrait of Mr. Stanley, 1866.

"We desire to do honour to his energy, courage, and pluck."

Sir Henry Rawlinson.

With Numerous Illustrations.

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AMONG the many unexpected incidents attending the return to this country of Mr. Henry M. Stanley, none will have amused him more than the very different accounts of his birth and early life which have appeared in the London and New York journals.

Our *Illustrated London News*, which hinted that it had received the information direct from the great traveller himself, says :—

Stanley is a Missourian, 28 years of age, who was one of the correspondents of the *New York Herald* in the American Civil War.

A second weekly paper, equally eminent with the one just quoted, also gave its readers to understand that it had obtained its intelligence direct from Mr. Stanley himself, and this journal declared him to be

an American, a native of the City of New York, in the State of New York, and born in the year 1843. Of a roving disposition, he commenced his travels early. While yet a boy he ran away from school, went to sea, and deserted his ship in the harbour of Barcelona. In swimming to land he lost his bundle of clothes, and was thus obliged to make his way ashore naked. In this condition he was found by a sentry and taken to the castle, where

he was allowed to sleep the night on some straw. In the morning a captain took pity on him, gave him some clothes, and bade him *adios*, after conducting him through the suburb of Barcelonetta. He started to Marseilles without a copper in his pocket, and though several times in danger of being imprisoned as a vagabond, continued his journey on foot through Southern Catalonia, and finally arrived at the frontier, sustaining himself by asking alms. In France his forlorn appearance attracted the attention of the police, and at the little town of Narbonne, in the department of the Aude, was apprehended, but after a short detention was released. Having received means from his friends upon arriving at Marseilles, he began his travels in a more respectable fashion, visited almost all the ports of Europe, studying as he travelled the histories of the countries through which he passed. The War of Secession breaking out, he returned to his own country, enlisted as a volunteer, was present at the battles of Fort Donelson, Fort Henry, and Pittsburg Landing. His time being up, he engaged as a newspaper correspondent, and thus witnessed several battles on the Potomac, and the capture of Fort Fisher. Peace having been concluded, Mr. Stanley travelled through the western territories, sometimes as a newspaper correspondent, sometimes taking practical lessons in gold mining. After this tour he set out on his return to his home, built a raft, and with a companion of his own age, floated down the Platte River to the Missouri River, a distance of over 700 miles. Arriving in New York his restlessness induced him to endeavour to proceed across Asia, *vis* Smyrna, with two American friends. After penetrating 300 miles into the interior, reaching Afiuma-Karahissar, he and his companions were robbed of 6,000 dollars by the Koords, and were obliged to go back to Constantinople to get redress, in which they succeeded. Returning again to America, he was engaged by the *Missouri Democrat* and *New York Tribune* to follow the Indian Peace Commissions and Hancock's military expedition against the Kiowas and Cheyemes.

When the Abyssinian campaign began he was engaged by the *New York Herald* to follow the British army. Having shown considerable aptitude and energy during

this campaign, he was requested to proceed to Crete and describe the real state of affairs there during the rebellion. Thence he went to the Spanish Revolution, and when that was terminated was ordered to Egypt to await Dr. Livingstone's arrival, who was then reported as coming home. Getting tired of waiting, in December 1869, he was again sent to Spain to report progress on the Republican revolutionists, and on his arrival in Madrid from the siege of Valencia, he received that now famous telegram to "come to Paris" to see Mr. Bennett, the subsequent circumstances of which we now know well. He had first to attend the inauguration of the Suez Canal, go up the Nile, then to Jerusalem, then to Damascus, Smyrna, Constantinople, Crimea, Southern Russia, Ural Mountains, Trebizond, Tiflis, through the Caucasus to interview Stoletoff at Bakou, across the Caspian Sea to Krasnavodsk, then through Persia *via* Teheran, Ispahan, Persepolis, Bushire, Bagdad, Muscat, India, Mauritius, Seychelle, Zanzibar, and thus to Central Africa, happily reaching Ujiji but twenty-five days after Livingstone arrived. Such is the brief story of yet a young life: something approaching to 120,000 miles of travel, a distance of nearly five times round the globe, having been accomplished by this most energetic traveller.

The reader will perceive, when he has read further on, that the latter half of the preceding account is tolerably correct, but that the whole of the first part is apocryphal.

Then came a New York journal, *Harper's Bazaar*, which declared Stanley to be—

A native of Missouri and 29 years of age.

Then there was his own journal, the *New York Herald*. A Mr. Jones had written to the editor,

claiming Stanley as a Welshman. The *Herald* replied :—

Mr. Stanley is neither an Ap-Jones nor an Ap-Thomas. Missouri, and not Wales, is his birthplace.

On July 28th, the same journal, in going over the roll of great African travellers and their nationalities, says :—

The one American is Stanley.

Hearth and Home was next, and it stated the gallant traveller to be—

A native of Connecticut, who emigrated when young with his family to the Western States.

A sixth journal said it "knew of a fact that he was born in Louisiana," whilst other papers claimed him for other States.

Whether Mr. Stanley was struck with the absurdity of these conflicting statements as to his birth-place, or from whatever cause, he has certainly added to the general confusion, and allowed the contention to continue.

But there are old friends of his, and relatives, who glory in his nationality, and who think that at least a trifle of his lustre may fall upon *them*. Although in humble circumstances, they assisted him

in early life ; they felt that one day he would be famous, that he would do some great thing : and now they say, "Yr ydyrn yn diolch i Dduw am eich llwyddiant, ond O! peidiwch gwadn eich cenedloldeb."*

That Mr. Stanley was born in Denbigh, and resided in its neighbourhood for the first fifteen years of his life, there is the very best proof in the world,—that is, if parish registers, sisters, brothers, and a mother may be considered material proof.

One thing has surprised the present writer, and that is, the unanimous *personal* feeling of the good people of Denbigh in this matter. They are gratified beyond measure that a townsman should have made for himself a world-wide fame, but they are hurt that their little town should be denied the honour of giving him birth. From morning to night the subject is one of continual conversation there. Every movement of their illustrious townsman is noted in the papers. Whether he has gone to Scotland to meet the Queen, or has accepted an invitation to a City dinner with the Lord Mayor of London, both facts are equally well known at Denbigh a few hours after their publication in London. The people stand about in groups discussing

* For the benefit of readers outside the Principality I give a rough English translation — "We thank God for your great success, but don't, don't deny your nationality!"

the intelligence. The conversation at all the public houses and in the tradesmen's shops in Vale Street turns upon the one absorbing topic, and it is a curious fact that copies of all the New York papers which have lately been fighting over the veracity of the Livingstone despatches can be readily seen in Denbigh, when it is very difficult indeed to get a sight of them in London.

The story of Stanley's school-boy days is known not merely to his fellow-townsmen, but to the Members of Parliament and most of the local dignitaries in North Wales; and, at the recent *Eisteddfod* at Portmadoc, the honour to Wales of Stanley's birth was "the principal topic of conversation."

Apart from the mere nationality of Stanley, it was thought that some account of his earlier adventures and extraordinary expeditions would show the training, the experiences of the man who found Dr Livingstone.

It is not generally known that Stanley had previously undertaken, and successfully carried out an expedition compared with which—the late United States Minister at Constantinople being the witness—

"A journey from Zanzibar to Unyanyembe in the centre of Africa is a safe trip."

This was a journey from the Mediterranean Sea