

STANLEY, (Sir) HENRY MORTON (alias ROWLANDS, JOHN) (1841 - 1904), explorer, administrator, and author

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Name: Henry Morton Stanley

Date of birth: 1841

Date of death: 1904

Spouse: Dorothy Coombe Stanley (née Tennant)

Parent: Elisabeth Parry

Parent: James Vaughan Horne



Parent: John Rowland

Gender: Male


Occupation: explorer, administrator, and author

Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration; Travel and Exploration

Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born 28 January 1841 in a cottage which used to stand within the precincts of the castle, Denbigh, son of John Rowlands and Elizabeth Parry, daughter of a Denbigh grazier and butcher - he was christened in the church of Tremeirchion, near Denbigh, according to *D.N.B.* (but at the church of S. Hilary, Denbigh, according to the Welsh memoir named below). His father dying in 1854 when the child was but two years old and the grandfather (John Rowlands, Llys, Llanrhaeadr) declining to become responsible for his care, he was looked after by relatives on the mother's side, the mother having, in the meantime, gone to London to service (and later marrying). Maternal uncles arranged for a married couple who lived within the precincts of the castle to look after the child who, when he was about 6, was deposited in St Asaph union workhouse. There, according to what Stanley says in his *Autobiography*, he was treated somewhat cruelly at times. When he was about 15 he decided to leave, without official permission; he spent some time as assistant in a school at Brynford, near Holywell, of which a cousin was master; he also dwelt for a short time at Tremeirchion, in the house of that cousin's mother. He stayed in Liverpool at the house of another aunt for a short time before he shipped for New Orleans, U.S.A., ostensibly as a cabin-boy. There he was befriended by a merchant named Henry Stanley, whose name he adopted as his own. He joined the Confederate (Southern) Army during the American Civil War; he also served, later, in the American navy. About this time he became fairly prominent as a newspaper reporter, going to Asia Minor, Abyssinia, and Spain. In October 1869 he was commissioned by the proprietor of the *New York Herald* to proceed to Africa 'to find (David) Livingstone,' the explorer and missionary who was feared lost. He started on his African journey from Zanzibar on 21 March 1871 and met with Livingstone at Ujiji on 10 November of that year. He stayed with Livingstone (and travelled with him) until 18 February 1872, but was forced to depart without being able to persuade Livingstone to return with him; his book, *How I found Livingstone*, was published in 1872. The other journeys which he undertook and the discoveries which he made need to be narrated in greater detail than space here allows. When news came of the death of Livingstone, Stanley was sent again to Central Africa, which he crossed from east to west. His third journey to Africa was in 1887, this time to attempt the rescue of Emin Pasha; Stanley discovered new lands which afterwards became known as the British East African Protectorate. On his return from this third journey Stanley was received more warmly but he had to wait until 1899 before he was awarded the G.C.B., and became known, thereafter, as Sir Henry Morton Stanley. He continued to travel overseas until near the end of his life. He lectured frequently and extensively in Britain, Germany, America, and Australia; he also published several books, the chief being *How I found Livingstone* , 1872; *Through the Dark Continent*, 1878; *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State*, 1885; *In Darkest Africa, or the Rescue of Emin*, 1890; *My early travels and adventures in America and Asia* , 1895.

Sir Henry M. Stanley was married on 12 July 1890, at Westminster Abbey, to Dorothy, daughter of Charles Tennant, Cadoxton Lodge, Neath, Glamorgan; it was lady Stanley who prepared for publication in 1909 *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley, G.C.B., D.C.L., LL.D.* On the title-page of the *Autobiography* is a list of the numerous honours which Stanley had received. Stanley died in London, 10 May 1904. He had wished to be buried in Westminster Abbey, near Livingstone, but permission was not granted by the dean; he was, therefore, buried in the churchyard of Pirbright, Surrey, near his new home, Furze Hill. For a short time (1895-1900) he had been Unionist M.P. for North Lambeth, but parliamentary life had no great appeal for him.

Long before the publication of the *Autobiography*, 1909, and particularly so after his return from his Livingstone journey - when he suddenly became famous - there had been much speculation and debate in regard to Stanley's origins and early life. North Wales people were emphatic in claiming him as a North Welshman; see *Hanes Bywyd Henry M. Stanley* , (Denbigh, 1890), and, particularly, Cadwalader Rowlands, *Henry M. Stanley. The Story of his Life from his Birth in 1841 to his*

Discovery of Livingstone in 1871 (London, 1872). Some Americans - Stanley at this time was an American citizen - claimed him as American - born - e.g. in Missouri. In 1895 there was published, in London, *The Birth, Boyhood, and Younger Days of Henry M. Stanley, the Celebrated Explorer. A South Wales Hero. By Thomas George (An Old Playmate)*; the author of this book claims that Stanley was no other than his schoolmate Howell Jones, son of Josuah Jones, bookbinder, Cenarth, in the valley of the Tivy, and that Stanley was born at Ysgar, in the parish of Betws, near Newcastle Emlyn. But lady Stanley and the writer of the detailed article on Stanley in the *D.N.B.* do not accept the findings of Thomas George. Stanley himself (see *Autobiography*) gives numerous details about the first sixteen or so years of his life - at Denbigh, S. Asaph, Tremeirchion, Brynford, and Liverpool; he describes a visit to his mother which he made soon after he had returned from his first stay in America. Cadwalader Rowlands instances other visits, but the *D.N.B.* biographer advises caution in regard to the use of the Rowlands book.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

To the sources already named add

A. J. A. Symons, *H. M. Stanley* (London 1933)

Jakob Wasserman, *H. M. Stanley - Explorer* (London 1932), translated from the German work published the same year in Berlin)

Further Reading

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Emyr Wyn Jones, James Francis o Lanelwy: Cywiro'r Maith Gamwri, *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions*, 38 (1989), tt. 71-86

Howard Huws, *Henry Morton Stanley: Y Cyfandir Tywyll* (Llandysul 2020)

[King Leopold II: The Forgotten Genocide in the Congo](#)

[Was Henry Morton Stanley involved in genocide?](#)

Felix Driver, [Stanley, Sir Henry Morton \(1841–1904\)](#), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

Edward Marston, [How Stanley wrote "In darkest Africa.": A trip to Cairo and back](#) (London 1890)

J. F. Packard, [Stanley and the Congo: explorations and achievements in the wilds of Africa of Henry M. Stanley](#) (Philadelphia c.1884)

[The American testimonial banquet to Henry M. Stanley in recognition of his heroic achievements in the cause of humanity, science & civilization](#) (London 1890)

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Charles H. Jones, [Livingstone's and Stanley's travels in Africa](#) (New York 1881)

J. T. Headley, Willis Fletcher Johnson, [Stanley's wonderful adventures in Africa](#) (Edgewood Publishing Co. 1889)

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Wikipedia Article: [Henry Morton Stanley](#)

Works

Henry Morton Stanley, J. F. Packard, [Stanley in the wilds of Africa: a complete record of the great explorations in the heart of the dark continent by Henry M. Stanley embracing how he found Livingstone](#) (Cincinnati 1879)

Henry Morton Stanley, [My early travels and adventures in America and Asia](#) (London 1895), Vol.I

Henry Morton Stanley, [My early travels and adventures in America and Asia](#) (London 1895), Vol.II

Henry Morton Stanley, [Hanes bywyd Dr. Livingstone](#) (Caernarfon 187-?)

Images

Vanity Fair: ["He found Livingstone"](#)

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