

Henry Morton Stanley, Sir Biography

Henry Morton Stanley, Sir

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Biography

Sir Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904), British explorer and journalist, opened Central Africa to exploitation by Western nations.

Henry Stanley was originally named John Rowland. He was born near Denbigh Castle, Wales, to John Rowland, a farmer, and an unmarried woman. The boy lived with his maternal grandfather until he was about 6, when his grandfather died. The youngster was sent to a workhouse, where he remained until the age of 15, when he ran away.

Young Rowland lived on a hand-to-mouth basis with various relatives until he was 18, when he signed on as a cabin boy and shipped to New Orleans. There a cotton broker, Henry Morton Stanley, adopted him and gave him his name. Stanley's adopted father died without providing for him. The young man volunteered as a Confederate soldier and was captured at Shiloh. He was released from prison by changing sides and finished the war in the Union Navy.

After the war Stanley became a newspaper correspondent. He covered Indian campaigns in the American West. In 1868 he went to Abyssinia to cover a British expedition. In 1869 the publisher of the *New York Herald* commissioned Stanley to find Dr. David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary explorer, lost somewhere in Central Africa. Stanley found Livingstone at Ujiji in 1871 after an 8-month search. They did some exploring together, and when Livingstone died in 1873, Stanley stepped into his shoes.

In 1874 Stanley began a 3-year journey to measure the lakes of Central Africa. From 1879 to 1884 he opened the Congo River Basin and laid the groundwork for the Congo Free State after setting up 21 trading posts along the river. Between 1887 and 1890 he led a mission to rescue Emin Pasha, the governor of Equatoria. Stanley settled the question of the source of the Nile and opened a vast territory which accelerated the desire of European countries to control African soil.

On July 12, 1890, Stanley married Dorothy Tennant. In 1895 he became a member of Parliament, and 4 years later he was knighted, receiving the Grand Cross of the Bath. He died on May 10, 1904, in London.