

# A Boy Who Knew Horace Greeley

By WILLIAM S. BAILEY

Illustrations by WILL CRAWFORD



He was sure to be the center of a group at Steve Steward's store, and there would be plenty said that would be worth hearing

**J**UST why it should have taken twenty-five years to put two and two together, when the equation connected my old friend the lumberman and Horace Greeley, I shall not attempt to explain. Yet it was only the other day it occurred to me that the lumberman was a boy of the near-by Chautauqua County village when Zaccheus Greeley lived on his hill farm two miles away over the Pennsylvania line, and my friend must therefore have seen the son, Horace, when the founder of The New York Tribune returned, as he often did, to the home which his parents years before had built in the primitive forest.

The answer to my question came quickly enough the next time I saw the old lumberman in my office door:

"How could I help knowing Horace Greeley? Didn't I win that lawsuit of his for him after he'd been fightin' it eleven years? And you didn't know I knew Horace Greeley!"

Well, I hadn't known it and admitted my ignorance with the humility I hoped would encourage an untold story of Horace Greeley among his Chautauqua County friends.

"It was a mighty long time ago, way back in the '60s, but I can see Horace Greeley yet, with his big white lambskin hat, which was so hot to wear he generally carried it in his hand, his bald head shinin' above his rim of hair. He had a sort of an odd way about him, but everybody in the village liked him, for he

was always polite and good natured.

"Yes, sir, Horace Greeley was certainly a kind-hearted man. You never would have known how kind-hearted that man was if I didn't tell you what he did for me. My father was down at Fortress Monroe after the war. He was one of the soldiers guarding Jefferson Davis. Well, my father got sick and when Mr. Greeley heard of it he went to Fortress Monroe to see him. And what's more he gave us money to bring him home. I guess you'll call that being kind-hearted!"

"Oh, that lawsuit?"

"Well, it was one of those old-time village rumpuses over a party line. It meant twenty-two acres to the other farmer; if he won, and he and Mr. Greeley fought that suit for eleven years. They had a fine lawsuit while it lasted, but when it was over I guess it had cost both of 'em twice what the land was worth.

"I was only a boy, but I was old enough to handle an ax and had worked as axman for the village surveyor. Occasionally, while wandering through the woods, I had come across trees with Roman figgers that had been cut in the bark years before. I was just boy enough to chop out the figgers, and finally I had a bagful of the numbered blocks.

"Well, one day Mr. Greeley came to see me; said he wanted to look at those blocks he'd heard people tell about. Next he wanted to borrow them, and then, do you know, he wanted me to take the blocks over to Erie, where they were tryin' that lawsuit. You see, they couldn't fix that party line

until they could tell where the old state line ran before it was shoved south two or three miles, when New York State gave Pennsylvania that little notch at the northwest corner so Pennsylvania could have a harbor on Lake Erie, and Horace Greeley and his lawyer had found that I had part of that old state line in my bag of blocks.

"Yes, sir, that's what them old Roman figgers were. And they got out their old surveyor's records that told 'em what kinds of trees the surveyors had cut those figgers in seventy or eighty years before when they surveyed the state line, and they matched 'em up by the kind of wood my blocks were, and they figgered their age by the bark that had grown into the figgers. So I testified about my numbered blocks and where I had chopped 'em out of the trees, and the judge he let the jury have 'em to look at, and those twenty-two acres are part of the Greeley farm to-day."

By this time the old lumberman was again the boy of the '60s, back in Clymer village, and seeing the editor "with the face of an angel and the walk of a clodhopper" as he saw him then, his stature grown to the heroic with the sixty years that were gone. For the boy had idealized Horace Greeley as a boy will idealize an older man from a different world who shows him friendship of a kind before unknown. And apparently Horace Greeley, in the long drive to Erie with the lad and I during the time the boy was with him at the trial, had seen something out of the ordinary in this village youngster. The boy of course knew that Greeley was a man of fame in the world of

which he dreamed—he knew the deference his elders of the village felt toward the editor—and the friendship soon became the boy's great possession.

"I suppose you never knew I was in business with Horace Greeley? Well, 'twasn't long after we won that lawsuit that Mr. Greeley gave me a third interest in workin' the sugar bush on his father's farm. There wasn't nobody around that part of the country had the ideas he did. Why, he'd sent and got a sap boiler from Louisiana—one of those long pans they used down there for makin' sugar out of sugar cane—and that put us ahead of all the other maple sugar makers, for in those days all they had were the old-fashioned iron kettles. With our big pan we made more maple sugar than anybody else, and made better sugar, too. Horace Greeley beat 'em all in bein' up to date, and he wanted you to have your full share, too.

"I got to reading The New York Tribune in those days to Zaccheus Greeley, Horace's father. Zaccheus Greeley was too old to be much of a hand at readin' himself, but he wanted to hear everything that Horace wrote in his paper.

"What's more, I read some of those editorials Horace wrote before he printed 'em. One day up at his father's house he gave me a sheet of paper to read. I guess it surprised him when he found I read his writin', for he said there was only one man in New York who could read what he wrote—he told me he couldn't read-it himself.

"After that he'd have me read his writin' by the hour—he wanted to know how it sounded, I guess. It was

a night to see him when he was writin'—you never saw any one who could write so fast, and I've heard him keep up a three-cornered argument and be writin' at the same time."

"One day Mr. Greeley told me he wanted to see me get on, and that was the way I got my start in lumbering; I went into the business with Horace Greeley. I was to cut all the cucumber trees in the woods on the Greeley farm and was to have half what we made, although he said he didn't know what I could do with the lumber. Well, I made those cucumber trees up into clapboard and sold it all. All the houses around there was made of logs and people was just beginnin' to use clapboard siding. The Greeley house of that day wasn't any log house. It was the first clapboarded house around there, painted red with a white cornice."

"There was one big cucumber tree on the farm that was a whopper, and I thought I'd buy that outright after he'd said he'd take \$5 for it. That tree made \$140 worth of clapboardin' for me, and how he did laugh when I told him. Yes, sir, he said he wanted to see me get on and I reckon he was glad to have me show I could do it."

"Then again I worked for Mr. Greeley splitting out white ash oars of flatboat sweeps, some of 'em thirty feet long. There was plenty of the right timber in the woods in those days and the oars sold quick enough over at Lake Erie. And just as he did in the other things, Mr. Greeley gave me my full share."

"I suppose you didn't ever hear of Mr. Greeley's pumpkin pie flour, did you? On one of his visits to the old home he said he'd fix it so I could make some money. He told me the plan and then I started out and got everybody I could to raise pumpkins. The plan was to have the farmers cut the inside of the pumpkins into rings and dry 'em. Then we arranged with a grist mill to grind the dried pumpkin into flour to be sold in New York for makin' pumpkin pies."

"We certainly got a great crop of pumpkins that year, and when they had 'em all dried we had 'em ground into fifty-pound cloth sacks of pumpkin pie flour. I hauled those sacks to Barcelona Harbor on Lake Erie and sent 'em to New York over the Erie Canal. I tell you that pumpkin flour sold in New York when nothing else would, and pumpkin raising prospered in Clymer."

I knew that spiritualism, then at the beginning of its modern form, had interested Horace Greeley. Ten years before the period of which the old lumberman was talking Mr. Greeley had entertained the Fox sisters, who carried their spirit rappings to New York, in his home in the city, and with other famous men of that day had attended their seances. Furthermore, the Kiantone movement, that strange mixture of communism and spiritualism, had started, a few years before, what was to have been its wonder city of Harmonia at Spiritual Springs, a few miles from the old Greeley homestead. No farther away, Thomas Lake Harris, the spiritualist poet Mr. Greeley had heard preach in New York as a Unitarian, was at that very time in stern control of his followers, including Lawrence Oliphant and his aristocratic mother, at his Brocton community on the nearby shore of Lake Erie. So I asked my friend if Mr. Greeley ever talked of his spiritualistic investigations.

"I don't suppose you ever heard of Lucindy-Colton, did you? Well, Lucindy lived up on Spirit Hill, near the Greeley farm, and she was quite a 'medium.' Why, she could do things in those trances of hers that no one ever heard of and nobody understood. There wasn't any road through the woods to her house, but the people used to come by short cuts. 'Twas only a

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mile from the Greeley farm and Horace used to go to the meetin's, but not so often as his brother Barnes, who was a convert. Yes, Mr. Greeley was interested a lot in Lucindy Colton's meetin's. He was kind of skeptical, but he said there might be something in it.

"But those spirits up on Spirit Hill used to make those people an awful lot of trouble. They'd follow 'em home through the woods after the meetin's, screechin' and howlin', and when the folks got to bed the spirits 'd stay 'round makin' trouble all night so nobody could sleep."

"One day in particular they had an afternoon spiritualist meetin' out under the trees in the orchard, with everybody sittin' around a long table covered with blankets. The daylight didn't seem to make no difference to the spirits up on Spirit Hill, for there was plenty of rappin's that day. The more the spirits rapped the more het up the people got, and finally one woman started a kind of war dance around the table, tellin' 'em she was the spirit of some old Indian chief. Mr. Greeley was home that day and had come to the meetin', but I could see he didn't think much of their goin's on. Fact is, he

told 'em as much himself, for I can remember yet the talk he gave those spiritualists out under the apple trees that summer afternoon, after the spirits got through with their rapping."

According to this boyhood friend of Horace Greeley, Zecchus Greeley and his sons, Horace and Barnes, owned between 300 and 400 acres of the hill country of northwestern Pennsylvania at the New York line. Horace was the family mainstay through his father's last years, and it was he who in largest measure maintained the old home as long as his father lived.

Like Horace, Barnes Greeley, who was named after a Calvinist deacon, must have been a "character," although having little in common with the knight errant of journalism. My historian admitted that Barnes "had no polish and he wasn't like Horace."

"Horace Greeley used to send books to the children on the farm, who were smart youngsters and liked to read, but the youngsters never got the books—Barnes took the books and sold 'em."

None of the odd sketches my old friend drew of "the philosopher in the white coat" appealed to my interest in the strange personality of Horace Greeley as much as the picture of him as the village oracle of Clymer. How frequently Greeley came back to the old homestead none of his writin' reveal. My local historian remembers him as returning "every month or so" during the last years of his father's life.

But, frequent or otherwise, as his visits may have been, these were occasions in the life of that day in Clymer Village and thereabouts, "Horace Greeley's home" and as the word passed from farm to farm and from one four-corners to another, the little village in the valley, overlooked by its Spirit Hill across the Pennsylvania state line and the Chautauqua hills to the north, dropped its homely tasks for the day. For the editor of The Tribune was sure to be the center of a group at Steve Steward's store at Clymer, and there would be plenty said that would be worth hearing, because "Greeley liked an argument better'n anything else and there wasn't anything he couldn't talk about."

If the day was fair his hearers would gather from four or five townships and a session would be held under the village trees, antedating the "Chautauqua idea" yet inspired by that common spirit that a decade later called the throngs to listen to teachers on the shore of the lake but a few miles away. The theme might be the national problems following the Civil War, or it might be advanced methods in agriculture or cattle raising. Although Horace Greeley "warred not upon others' convictions," more than once the religious views of the day were brought into the forum; it seemed to make no difference to Mr. Greeley for "he could talk on anything" and "controversy was his perpetual panoply."

Nor was the occasion of the homecoming one to be neglected by the small-town politicians, who found matters of importance to be discussed with the editor of The Tribune. And so this "unmanageable politician" received these crafty workers in the public vineyards, who besought him for advice and guidance, and then went away honored sharers of his editorial secrets—in their own eyes and, they hoped, in the eyes of the villagers.

To-day there is nothing left to connect the life either of Horace Greeley or his father with the farm on the top of windswept Spirit Hill. The old home has been replaced by a house of more modern construction and all of the other old landmarks are gone. Nor in the near by village of Clymer are any to be found who sat with Horace Greeley around the stove in Steve Steward's store, or under the apple trees on Spirit Hill.

## The Assumed Name

By ALBERT ACREMANT

Translated by William L. McPherson

**L**ÉONIDE PANTIN-RACOUX, of the Opera, had been married several days.

"I understand, my dear," he said to his wife, Arlette, "how delighted you are to have married so celebrated a man. If I were in your place it seems to me that I should be very much overcome with the honor."

"I am, my dear, very much overcome by it," the young wife replied.

"Unfortunately, glory has its inconveniences. It is my duty to warn you. I am well known, very well known, too well known. Thousands of auditors in the course of evenings, which will certainly remain among the most inspiring of their lives, have riotously applauded me. Millions of newspapers have vulgarized my picture, if I may put it that way. Very often I would prefer to be unrecognized by the crowd. But it is enough that I appear in the street to make people point at me."

"It is very flattering."  
"But how tiresome! I am afraid of not being able to be alone with you enough during our honeymoon. What would you say if in every town delegations come to greet me?"

"I would say: 'It is magnificent.'"  
"Yes, at first. Then you would become very tired of it."

"Do you think so?"  
"Well, listen. At Bourges, where we

makes our first stop, I sang two months ago. It was a wonderful success, such as the town had not known in years."

"How beautiful that is!"

"No, how boring it is! But how are we going to avoid all this?"

"Take an assumed name."

"Is it possible that you should suggest such a thing?"

"Yes, it is possible. I suggest it."

"The questions then arises: What pseudonym shall I take?"

"Dupont? Durand?"

"No, thank you. I should then have too many relatives."

"Bernard?"

"So be it!"

"Henri Bernard!"

"It is as commonplace a name as anybody could wish for."

Some days later M. Léonide Pantin-Racoux, of the Opera, entered the largest hotel in Bourges and inscribed the name of Henri Bernard on the register.

At first the young woman clerk, who was nearsighted, showed no astonishment. But on looking more sharply at the new guest, she seemed to be greatly surprised.

The artist, who had not failed to notice her sudden change of expression, was able to say presently to his wife: "You see, I was recognized."

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