

## [Bacheller, Irving]

### Life Sketch of Irving Bacheller, Noted North Country Author<sup>1</sup>

A life sketch of Irving Bacheller, noted North Country novelist, who died Friday night at White Plains, is herewith presented.

Irving Bacheller always considered this section his home. He took deep pride in his St. Lawrence county background. It figured in at least a dozen of his books. He wrote of it with deep feeling and understanding. His strongly drawn features and his rugged physique seemed to personify the strength and character of the North.

He was born on Waterman Hill in the town of Pierrepont, eight miles from Canton village, on September 26, 1859. Mr. Bacheller liked to recall the sturdy brick house which was his birthplace. There were the towering elms which bordered the driveway. There was the pump just off the side porch, the apple orchard in the rear and the north pasture with its striking view of miles of countryside ending with the faint ribbon of the St. Lawrence. There was the good-size living room where the family gathered in the evening and where his mother frequently read poetry. And there was the small upstairs bedroom which he shared with his older brother, Burton.

This was the Paradise Valley countryside of which Mr. Bacheller wrote with such charm in "Eben Holden" and in several of his other books. It was peopled by hard-headed Yankees who had come into St. Lawrence county in the first years of the 19th century. The first settlers made homes in Pierrepont as early as 1806. Mr. Bacheller was born only twelve years after the death of Silas Wright. His personal and political influence was still strong through all of this central part of the county. It was a land of stalwart and industrious pioneers.

Mr. Bacheller's father—Sanford Paul Bacheller—was of Vermont stock. He moved into St. Lawrence county in 1831 with his mother and six brothers and sisters. He was then a boy of 11. His father had died in an accident three years before and at the behest of a brother, the mother had bravely brought her large family to a new home in St. Lawrence county. In his "Coming Up the Road," Mr. Bacheller relates the story his father had told him of the pioneer journey from Vermont. The family came over the difficult Chateaugay trail in an ox-cart. The trip took five weeks. One child was ill much of the way. The family musket with its long barrel was used to bring down game and provide meat.

Paul Bacheller—he dropped the Sanford in mature years—grew up in Pierrepont. When he was in his middle 20s he traveled to Springfield, Massachusetts, intent on obtaining a job. There were relatives in that section. He worked for a brief period for an uncle, but more important, he met attractive Achsah Annabella Buckland. They were married on Christmas Day, 1884. He was then 25 and his bride was 21. They found their way into the North Country and established the home on Waterman Hill in which they lived for 20 years.

Irving Bacheller had deep affection for his mother and father. They exerted a strong influence over his life habits and manner of thinking. He spoke of them pleasantly in many of his writings.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcriber's note: this transcription covers the early years of his career.

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### **His Father Recalled**

His father was a powerfully built man. He did a large share of the hard farm work himself. For years Irving Bacheller remembered that his father rose at 4 in the morning. Mr. Bacheller apparently inherited his rugged physique from his father. He was a cheerful man by personality and yet underlying his cheerfulness was a trace of melancholy which often made him restless and dissatisfied. He could be jolly but he could be moody by temperament too.

Mr. Bacheller frequently recalled a feat of which his father was especially proud. He would hold a broomstick in front of him and jump over it between his hands. He had a good singing voice. He liked to play the violin. Frequently on Saturday evenings Paul Bacheller would bring his fiddle to Crary Mills for dances.

Irving Bacheller's mother was a woman of fine character and unusual intelligence. In one of his books he described her as "one of the last puritans." She was, he wrote, "a frail woman of medium height with auburn hair, blue eyes and a very white skin." He spoke many times of her neatness in appearance and her emphasis on cleanliness.

His affection and admiration for his mother was deeply planted. She had a profound effect upon his early life. She was well educated and well read. One of Irving Bacheller's earliest memories was of his mother reading to him just before bedtime. She was especially fond of Longfellow, Tennyson and Washington Irving. She liked Addison and Milton and Mr. Bacheller related how she paid him a penny for every line of Milton which he memorized. From her he gained a liking for books and reading.

His mother's interest in literature played a part in the name he was given. This was a day of Biblical names and unusual names... Irving Bacheller's father thought Solomon would be a fine name for the new baby. But the mother stood strongly for Addison Irving after Joseph Addison and Washington Irving. Years later Mr. Bacheller wrote that his father gave in to his mother on the question of names but that his father saw to it that the "Addison" was dropped. Irving was the only name he remembered being called.

Mrs. Bacheller's father, Epaphrus Buckland, lived with the family during most of Irving Bacheller's childhood. Mr. Bacheller remembered him as a kindly and interesting man who read widely and whose speech was marked by a broad "a." Epaphrus Buckland died in 1875 after the family had moved to Canton and was buried in the family plot at Evergreen cemetery.

Irving Bacheller was the sixth of the seven children in the Bacheller family. The eldest child was Elvira, born in 1848, eleven years before Mr. Bacheller. Then there was Sarah, born in 1850; Charles Loren, born in 1852; Arthur, born in 1853; and Burton, born the next year in 1854. Mr. Bacheller always had a special affection for his brother, Burton, who was five years his senior. Burton Bacheller was six feet tall and powerful physically. Mr. Bacheller always claimed that he had "the best mind" in the family. Four years later, in 1863, the seventh child, Wilbur Samuel Bacheller, was born.

Much sadness surrounded the lives of these brothers and sisters. Mr. Bacheller outlived all of them by many years. Sarah married a Tuller when she was 17 and went to live in Auburn. She died in childbirth [in 1873] at the age of 23. Her small daughter was brought into the Bacheller home but lived only a short time.

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Loren was injured in an accident. Defective boarding in a bridge near Canton caused him to be thrown from his carriage. He received injuries which resulted in his death in the spring of 1880. Later in life Mr. Bacheller told how, even though he was a boy, he cared for his brother and how he died in his arms.

Arthur Bacheller died of gallstones in 1881 when he was 23 years of age. Burton Bacheller was a victim of infantile paralysis and died in 1877 at the age of 23. Burton was visiting in Wisconsin when he was stricken and the father, Paul Bacheller, journeyed into the West to bring him home. He lived about two years but never walked again.

Elvira taught school near the Bacheller home for several terms. Later she married a Stickles. They had no children. Wilbur Bacheller died in 1907 at the age of 44. He was associated with Mr. Bacheller in the Bacheller syndicate for several years. Of him Mr. Bacheller wrote this many years later: "He was bright and able, really one of the ablest men I have ever known, but he was afflicted with a desire to drink and every four or five months he would go on a spree until he finally died while still young and with great possibilities before him."

Irving Bacheller spent his boyhood in the picturesque, pioneer countryside of Pierrepont. By modern standard this was a lonely section. Only five families lived in a neighborhood of several miles. Yet they were strong people. The Crays, the Bullises, the Andrews were prominent in the town. They had cleared the land and were making a comfortable living from it.

### **Hard Work and Fun**

There was hard work but there was fun. Mr. Bacheller spoke and wrote fondly of maple sugaring in the spring and of husking bees in the fall. When he was six years old he was allowed to ride old Jim, the faithful family horse, to Pierrepont Center where he could purchase a stick of striped candy at Ben Hubbard's store.

Every Sunday the family gathered either at the white schoolhouse or at Brick Chapel, one of the old churches in the county, for worship. Elder Whitford and Elder Pangborn did the preaching. In summer the services were held in the chapel but in winter the neighborhood gathered at the school.

Mr. Bacheller began his schooling when he was five. His sister, Elvira, was his first teacher. One day when he was about ten Elvira placed a group of words on the blackboard and asked her pupils to write a story about them. Irving Bacheller handed his in and his sister read it to the class. The pupils laughed and Elvira took it home with her to read to the family. His father roared with laughter and his mother more quietly said it was well done. This was Irving Bacheller's first attempt at writing.

From the time he was five until he was nine, he gave over Friday afternoons to Mertill Crandall's singing classes. Throughout his long life Mr. Bacheller always enjoyed music and liked to sing himself. Then there were the special penmanship classes which Nelson Parmenter held at Pierrepont Center and when somewhat older he attended them. Mr. Parmenter was apparently a stylist, for Mr. Bacheller learned from him the fine, inimitable handwriting which his correspondents knew so well.

When he was twelve Mr. Bacheller had the job of starting the fire in the schoolhouse on winter mornings. He was paid \$3 for this work and at the end of the first winter he purchased a year's subscription to Youth's Companion.

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Farmwork did not especially appeal to him. However there was always plenty for him to do. At the age of ten he was helping with the cows and he did his share of the other work. Best of all he enjoyed reading and his mother encouraged his interest in books. As a Christmas gift when he was twelve she gave him Dickens' "Great Expectations" and the following year she presented him with "David Copperfield." These he and his mother read aloud. The family always subscribed to Horace Greeley's New York Tribune and this was read with care by the light of the evening lamp.

When he was 13 Irving Bacheller obtained his first real job. When school was out for the summer he journeyed to Crary Mills to work in Aaron Barrows' general store. Young Irving was expected to sweep out, wait on customers and do many other odd jobs. Mr. Barrows had the telegraph agency and he taught his young helper the rudiments of telegraphy. Mr. Bacheller made his home with the Barrows family, taking with him the small, hair-covered trunk with brass-headed tacks which had belonged to his grandfather. This work for Mr. Barrows was a real experience and gave Irving Bacheller his first contact with the outside world.

That fall of 1872 when Mr. Bacheller was 13 his father gave up the farm and the family moved to Canton. This was a real turning point in his life. Paul Bacheller, the father, was a restless man and farming had been difficult. The farm on Waterman Hill had burned and the family had taken over the neighboring farm owned by Perry Bacheller, Paul Bacheller's brother. This arrangement may not have been completely satisfactory and may have hastened the decision to move to Canton. But more likely Paul Bacheller had grown weary of farming life and work had become more trying than ever in the years following the Civil War. Taxes were high and prices were low.

The Waterman Hill farm in which Mr. Bacheller was born was rebuilt and it did not go out of family hands until 1933. For almost 50 years Henry Bacheller, an uncle of Irving Bacheller, made his home here. He died in October, 1933. He specified in his will that the homestead be transformed into a home for aged persons in the town of Pierrepont but the executors of his estate found this an impossibility.

### **Moved to Canton**

The Bacheller family moved to Canton in September, 1872. Almost immediately Irving Bacheller with his brothers, Burton, Loren and Arthur, entered Canton Academy. This was an experience. It was a big change from the one-room country school to which the boys had been accustomed. A. P. Stowell was the principal. He was a tall, stalwart man, a stern disciplinarian but an excellent teacher. More than once, as he later wrote, Irving Bacheller saw Professor Stowell thrash schoolmates for sluggishness in work or infractions of the rules.

Irving Bacheller, however, did well. School fascinated him. Long after, he remembered how the day started with a brief religious service which consisted of a prayer and reading from the Bible by Mr. Stowell and the singing of a hymn by all of the students. He had algebra and Latin with Mr. Stowell.

He studied besides logic, English, spelling and writing. He finished fourth in his class when he was graduated in 1876 and Mr. Stowell presented him with a leather wallet which he kept for years. Through the assistance of Mr. Stowell he secured a job as tutor to the two small children of Columbus Smith, wealthy resident of Middlebury, Vermont. This was when he was only 17 years of age.

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The Bacheller home in Canton was at what is today No. 2 Gouverneur street. It was a low house and was painted brown. It was a sizeable house. Mr. Bacheller has written that there were three bedrooms downstairs and four upstairs. The parlor and the living room were large. A hall which he called gloomy and dark ran from the front to the rear. In back of the house the property sloped sharply to the willowed shore of the river.

Life did not seem to be easier for the Bachellers in Canton. Paul Bacheller became involved in the selling of what was known as a patent right machine, a labor saving device for farmers, which seems to have been impractical. At any rate the venture was unsuccessful and Paul Bacheller lost money. From this he transferred to the buying and selling of cattle and while this was not lucrative it did provide badly needed income. These were the years after Burton had been brought back from Wisconsin in a wheel chair, seriously paralyzed. He lived on for two years and his case led to worry, care and considerable expense.

The ties between Irving Bacheller and his mother grew during these years. Their fondness for books was a common bond. Mr. Bacheller has written how he could recite a large part of "Paradise Lost" much to his mother's satisfaction and how he learned by heart most of the last chapter of "David Copperfield." He loved the Oliver Optic books which were then in vogue. The dime novels of the day were sternly forbidden in the Bacheller home but some of them did creep in.

Canton in the 1870s was a growing village of about 1,000 persons. The streets were dusty and most everyone, including the Bachellers, kept a cow and chickens. The north side of Main street which had suffered seriously in the fires of 1869 and 1870 was slowly being rebuilt.

Irving Bacheller came to know the leading citizens well. They always impressed him. There was Leslie W. Russell, for example, whom Mr. Bacheller always considered one of the "handsomest men I had seen." He particularly liked to attend court sessions and the skill and oratory of Daniel Magone of Ogdensburg always stood out in his mind. Dsr. Isaac M. Atwood was the pastor of the Universalist church. The Bachellers attended his church and Mr. Bacheller claimed he was the ablest preacher he ever heard. There was Dr. Absalom Graves Gaines, president of St. Lawrence, a stern man who walked about Canton streets with his cape, his cane and his dog. Dr. Gaines sometimes preached in the Universalist church and Irving Bacheller came to know him.

Early one evening in June, 1878, he saw Dr. Gaines sitting on the porch of the Hodskin hotel. The 19-year-old youth approached him and asked to speak to him. Dr. Gaines suggested that he sit down. Irving Bacheller then told Dr. Gaines that he desired to enter St. Lawrence. The college president told him to spend the summer in study and to prepare himself for the college requirements.

Three months later Irving Bacheller entered St. Lawrence. He was suffering from poison ivy infection and his father brought him up to Richardson Hall, the sole college building, in the family carriage. St. Lawrence was then in its infancy as a school. The student body numbered less than 60. Six men composed the faculty. Eighteen other young men and women entered the college that September day, the members of the future class of 1882.

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That first day in college was an exciting one for Irving Bacheller. The whole student body gathered in the small chapel in the north end of Richardson hall. The faculty sat on the platform. Dr. Gaines offered a brief prayer. Then he asked Foster L. Backus, member of the class of 1873, back for a brief vacation, to sing "When the Mists Have Rolled Away." When the brief service ended the sophomore class made sport in the annual "salting" of the freshmen—throwing salt at them or rubbing it on their faces.

### **Received Good Marks**

Irving Bacheller did well in St. Lawrence. In his freshman year he studied Latin, French, German, mathematics and rhetoric. His marks were generally good. In his sophomore year he was chosen class orator and he appeared in the annual debate between the students of the liberal arts college and the theological school. He did a little boxing and had his nose broken by an adversary. He delivered the junior class address and he was president of the college literary society. His closest friend during these years was a man somewhat older—George James Clark, a member of the class of 1872. George Clark was a somewhat unusual man but brilliant and Irving Bacheller liked him for the literary background and his keen wit. They were intimate friends for a long period of years. For two summers both Mr. Bacheller and George Clark worked for the Canton weekly newspaper, the Commercial Advertiser, owned at that time by James D. Tracey.

Irving Bacheller established one of the first fraternities at St. Lawrence, Alpha Omicron chapter of Alpha Tau Omega. This was in his senior year in the late winter of 1882. The shadow of the Civil War still hung heavily and Mr. Bacheller with four other undergraduates—Fremont Peck of Stone Mills, Jefferson county, Hobart Chandler of Canton, Charles Johns of Salamanca, and Chauncey Martyn of Canton—decided to petition for a national fraternity which was strong in the South. They hoped by bringing Alpha Tau Omega to St. Lawrence to weld the spirit of the North and the South together. The fraternity then had 24 chapters and 17 of them were in the South.

Dr. Gaines was receptive to the plan and presented the small group with a room in Richardson hall as a meeting place. The fraternity granted a charter and the chapter was founded on March 18, 1882. To raise additional money Mr. Bacheller and his associates brought the Madison Square Theater company to Canton. The play, "Hazel Kirke," was presented and \$191 was obtained.

Mr. Bacheller was graduated in June, 1882. He was then 23, among the oldest in the class of 14 men and women. His senior oration delivered before a capacity crowd in the Town Hill was on the theme of "The Attic Drama," a study of ancient Greece and its literature and theater.

He had worked hard in college. He was thin and he feared that the tendency toward tuberculosis which had struck deeply into his family might cut short his career. It was then that a young acquaintance, Ogden H. (?)ethers, studying law in the offices of Sawyer & Russell, told him he should learn the art of deep breathing. Mr. Bacheller always claimed that his changed his whole life, gave him new vigor and strength and did much to lengthen his life. Daily breathing exercises improved his health and were a ritual with Mr. Bacheller for years.

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After graduation Irving Bacheller's friend George Clark suggested that they go to New York and look for a job. There was some thought that they could secure teaching appointments in South America. Both studied Spanish religiously under the old Academy principal, Mr. Stowell, who had taught in South America himself.

No jobs in South America were available and so Mr. Bacheller turned to newspaper work. He liked writing and hoped that some New York editor would give him a job. With Clark he canvassed the New York newspaper offices without much success.

New York in that day of the early 1880s was a boisterous town of well over a million population. There was the same impersonal attitude which marks the city today and yet Irving Bacheller managed to make friends easily and his acquaintances grew. He always said that he arrived in the era of Lydia Pinkham and John L. Sullivan and that New York showed the effect of both.

Jobs came hard. He had hoped for something big and exciting such as working for Charles A. Dana's Sun but managing editors and city editors greeted him politely with the words, "Nothing right now." Finally he secured work with the "Daily Hotel Reporter," an advertising sheet of four pages edited by one Louis Klopach who became Irving Bacheller's close lifetime friend. It was Bacheller's work to visit each of the two dozen leading hotels, to get personals and special items.

### **Enters Journalism**

He grew to enjoy his new contacts and the \$12 a week which he was paid was badly needed. However, when he was offered a job four months later with the Brooklyn Daily Times, he quickly accepted it because he desired to enter regular journalism. He moved from assignment to assignment, attracting no particular attention until he secured the diary of George Washington Greely, the Arctic explorer, who had landed in New York. This was a scoop of major proportions and Irving Bacheller received a \$50 check from the Times' editor in recognition.

This year of 1883 when he went to work for the Times was a momentous one in his life. In the late Spring of '83 his father died. Paul Bacheller had lived a hard life and his health broke early—he was only 63 at the time of his death. He left no estate and Irving Bacheller's mother returned to the business of doing outside sewing to earn a small income.

On Dec. 13, 1883 Irving Bacheller married Miss Anna Detmar Schultz of Brooklyn. They had known each other for about a year. Miss Schultz, medium in stature with blonde hair, was of German parentage. She was the sister of one of Mr. Bacheller's fellow workers on the Brooklyn Times. She attended several of the social gatherings which the Times staff arranged and it was here that she and Irving Bacheller became acquainted. In his "Coming Up the Road," Mr. Bacheller says she was a force in my life not less important than that of my mother."

In 1884—the spring of 1884—came one of the turning points in Irving Bacheller's life. Henry Irving, the English actor, landed in New York for his first American tour in the fall. The Brooklyn Times had Mr. Bacheller write a sketch of him. This short bit of writing pleased Mr. Irving and he invited Irving Bacheller to have lunch with him at the Brevoort hotel. With him was Joseph Hatton, the English writer, who was at that time in high favor.

The conversation at the lunch table turned to American reading and Mr. Hatton suggested to Irving Bacheller that he try to sell to American newspapers and

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magazines the serial rights to a new Hatton novel. Mr. Bacheller agreed and went to work. At first he had little success but finally the Philadelphia Public Ledger agreed to take the manuscript for \$3,500. Mr. Hatton gave Bacheller \$500. Buoyed by this success the two men discussed a further project: Mr. Hatton would write a series of sketches of famous British figures such as Gladstone, Disraeli, Thomas Hardy and John Ruskin and Mr. Bacheller would sell them serially in the United States.

Mr. Bacheller secured a leave of absence from the Times and spent three weeks traveling. He came back with contracts from 27 newspapers for Mr. Hatton's sketches. His own profit from the venture was \$1,400. This was much more lucrative than his newspaper work so he left the city room of the Brooklyn Times and opened an office of his own in the Vanderbilt building near Park Row.

Thus was born the Bacheller Syndicate, an enterprise which enjoyed marked success and kept Irving Bacheller busy for 14 years. Mr. Bacheller was only 35 and yet he quickly came into contact with many of the major literary figures of America and the Continent. He journeyed into New England, hoping to induce the elder Oliver Wendell Holmes and John Greenleaf Whittier to write their memoirs for his syndicate. He had no luck. He found Holmes "a cheerful man, his head well covered with snowy hair, his white side-whiskers close-cropped and his eyes kindly." Whittier at his home in Danvers was "more aged and solemn than Holmes." He had a shawl around his shoulders and his voice was thin and low. Both men assured the young syndicate manager that their writing was finished.

He went up to Hartford and saw Mark Twain. "He was a sad man," wrote Mr. Bacheller later, gigantic intellectually but not fully furnished. He was in a room upstairs the day I visited him. He sat with his feet on the window sill and smoking a cob pipe, looking out at the landscape which at that time had the first touch of snow. Later Irving Bacheller came to know Mark Twain in a happier light and found him when interested "in a situation," a matchless spinner of stories.

The syndicate set a fast pace. Mr. Bacheller and his associates—by 1890 he had a staff of ten—seemed to enjoy greater success in their sale of the works of English writers than American writers. Some of Kipling's writings had their first circulation in the United States through the Bacheller Syndicate. Sir Conan Doyle was paid \$1,500 for every 1,000 words he wrote. Anthony Hope became known to American readers through the syndicate.

One day a young, pale-faced man walked into Irving Bacheller's office with a bulky manuscript under his arm. He was Stephen Crane and he offered the syndicate his "The Red Badge of Courage." Irving Bacheller took it home and he and Mrs. Bacheller read all night. The following morning he offered Mr. Crane \$5,500 for 50,000 words. This was [a] greater length than any other Bacheller feature but Mr. Bacheller believed he could persuade his clients to buy it up in 20 serial installments. A dozen papers purchased the rights and "The Red Badge of Courage" was first published. It started Stephen Crane on his brief, meteoric career.

Mr. Bacheller might have made a fortune with his syndicate but he did not. He always admitted that his sense of business was sometimes faulty, that he paid too much for material and that he took long chances. The depression of the mid-90s cut deeply. Competition was growing especially from the S. S. McClure people. Furthermore Irving Bacheller wearied of the exacting work and the mounting



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problems. He was eager to write himself, to try his hand at a literary career. And so in 1898—February 1898—the Bacheller Syndicate came to an end.

### **"Eben Holden"**

For weeks and months Irving Bacheller had a novel of the North Country in his mind. The characters, their lives and experiences were clearly outlined. It was "Eben Holden," the story of pioneer St. Lawrence county, the land in which Irving Bacheller himself had grown to manhood.

It was not his first book, however. In 1892 during a vacation in Maine he had written "The Master of Silence," a story of the Parish family of Ogdensburg. This created mild interest and ran serially in the New York Herald during November and December 1892. It was published by Mark Twain's publishing house, Charles L. Webster & Company of New York. The following year he wrote "The Still House of O'Darrow," a story of a dual personality, a rather weird, ominous tale, which was put out by Cassell & Company of London.

Those years of 1898, 1899 and 1900 were perhaps the most stirring and most important in the life of Irving Bacheller. He and his wife were living in a second floor apartment over a drug store in Tarrytown. They had more visions and ideas than money. That summer of '98 Mr. Bacheller wrote 25,000 words of the new novel. He took the work with him during a brief journey to Canton and a vacation in the Adirondacks. As always, he wrote in longhand and his wife would take the pages of small, picturesque writing and type them.

This was the situation when Irving Bacheller received a telegram from Joseph Pulitzer, famous editor of the New York World, asking him to spend the day with him at Narragansett Pier. Mr. Pulitzer was looking for an editor of the Sunday World magazine. Two friends, Don Seitz, who was the World's business manager, and John L. Heaton, an editorial writer—both St. Lawrence men—recommended Irving Bacheller to Mr. Pulitzer. Mr. Bacheller had lunch with the publisher and several of his associates. Mr. Pulitzer was then partially blind. After some hours of conversation he offered the job to Mr. Bacheller at a salary of \$9,000 a year. This was an impressive sum in that day. Even so, he was tempted to refuse. The novel seemed more important. Mrs. Bacheller, however, urged him to accept and realizing the remarkable opportunity presented to him, he moved into the World fold.

He held the position of Sunday editor for (15?) months. It was pleasant work. Charles Kelsey Gaines of the class of 1876 at St. Lawrence who had been with Mr. Bacheller in syndicate days became an associate editor. Undoubtedly Irving Bacheller would have remained indefinitely if "Eben Holden" had not come to the forefront again. Late in 1899 he sent 25,000 words of the novel to his former friend on the Brooklyn Times, Elbridge S. Brooks, now head of the publishing firm of Lothrop & Company of Boston.

[A] few weeks later Mr. Brooks wired Bacheller that the first chapters were impressive and asked him if he could finish the work in three months. This was a stern assignment. Mr. Bacheller secured a leave of absence from the World and went to work. He wrote approximately 75,000 additional words in 90 days. The job was finished in early April, 1900.

The first edition of "Eben Holden" was published by Lothrop on July 2, 1900. It was widely acclaimed from the first. The book went through four printings by

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September 1 and by Christmas, 1900, 265,000 copies had been sold. This would be spectacular today but in 1900 it was an astonishing sale. Through the years more than 1,200,000 copies of "Eben Holden" were purchased. Within a few years of Mr. Bacheller's death it was selling 1,000 copies annually. It has now been withdrawn from print.

Irving Bacheller was 40 years old when "Eben Holden" was published. William Dean Howells wrote to him and hailed it as "a great joy in its truth and freshness." Edmund Clarence Stedman was equally enthusiastic. But Mr. Bacheller characteristically brought the first published copy of his novel to Canton for his mother. He had dedicated the book to her. In later years he liked to tell of his mother's reaction: "Proudly I took 'Eben Holden' to my mother. For two days she sat reading it. Often I saw her laughing quietly. Then she put her hand gently on my brow and said it was good. She was still afraid of spoiling me."

**Mother Died in 1900**

Mr. Bacheller was always glad that his mother lived to witness the success of "Eben Holden." She died in Canton in December of 1900.

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In 1921 while he was in Canton for college commencement Mr. Bacheller gave the original manuscript of "Eben Holden" to St. Lawrence and it is now in the University museum.

The tremendous success of "Eben Holden" made Irving Bacheller as a writer. No longer did he toy with the idea of returning to journalism.

...

Mr. Bacheller never lost his love of the North Country. Incidentally it was he who gave this northern section its name... The North Country was the scene for the majority of Mr. Bacheller's writings. His characters in many of his other novels came from the common rank and file of North Country folks.

*Daily Times, Watertown NY, Sat. 25 Feb 1950*

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