

Notes on the Life of Henry Nisbet (1809-1867) and His Descendants

by Ian Nisbet Ross – November 2021

Henry Nisbet was the sixth of thirteen children of James and Helen Nicol Nisbet. He was born June 15, 1809, in the gardener's cottage at St. Mary's Isle near the town of Kirkcudbright. Like his elder brother James (1798-1849), when he reached maturity Henry became an attorney and banker, joining his brother in the remote village of Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. James had started his career there as a "writer", then married, and started a family. Sometime after 1832 James moved his family and law practice to Edinburgh, but Henry remained at Tobermory the rest of his life.



On July 24, 1830, Henry married 20-year-old Matilda Ann Douglas at Cramond, Scotland. Matilda was the daughter of John Douglas and the late Mary Crow who had died when Matilda was only nine years old. The following August 19, 1831, Matilda gave birth to what would be their only child, Mary Miles Fletcher Nisbet. The inspiration for Mary's two middle names is unknown. In 1839, Henry's mother Helen mentions in a letter that Matilda "*has been very poorly,*" but does not elaborate. She does mention that "*Mary is a fine girl.*" In another letter later that year, she writes, "*Mary is not very strong. She is much troubled by her side. But she is growing.*" From this it appears Mary may have had a medical condition at an early age, possibly tuberculosis.

Henry's home at Tobermory, Erray Villa, was befitting a local banker and lawyer. The large stone main building was surrounded by carefully tended gardens and tracts of forest and parklands. The care of the grounds was something in which Henry took especially great pride, and it probably provided respite and refuge from a troubling domestic life.



Erray Villa circa 1868



Henry Nisbet, Tobermory, circa 1865

In February 1846, Helen wrote that “Mrs. Henry Nisbet and her daughter Mary Miles are to be here next week on their way to Edin. where Mary is to be placed in a boarding school for 6 months to finish her education. She is now done with her Governess.” Mary was 14 at this time. Then, just sixteen months later, a notice in the *Caledonian Mercury* announced that on July 15, 1847, Mary was wed at Tobermory to Francis Bowen Pritchard, Esq., a surgeon in the Royal Navy. If birth records are correct, on her wedding day Mary would have been one month shy of her 16th birthday. In Scotland at that time, it was legal for girls as young as 12 to marry (unlike in England and other countries where the minimum age had been raised to 16).

Matilda’s Mental Illness



Matilda Ann Douglas Nisbet

In an 1849 letter to her son William, Helen Nisbet documented in dramatic detail the final months of Matilda’s life which culminated in her death on October 16th at the Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum at Morningside:

I do not know if you was even informed of their circumstance - she was only there something less than four months. When Margt wrote you I was at Tobermory - Matilda at that time was going deranged which was the reason of me being sent for and after I left she got worse and worse so much so that from one thing to another they had to have 2 men in the House and all the Windows nailed

down - you may judge what a state Henry was in but I cannot enter into all the particulars - Suffice it to say that her Son in-law who was sent for from Portsmouth got her prevailed upon to go with him on a trip to the Island of Sky but instead of taking her there brought her to Edin. and placed her as above where at last she finished her course -

Other records confirm that daughter Mary and her husband Frances (a.k.a. Francis) were indeed living in Portsmouth, England at the time of Mathilda's breakdown.



Following Matilda's death, Henry spent the next 17 years as a bachelor. His work as a banker and lawyer kept him quite busy, according to his mother's letters, and in his spare time he worked in his gardens at Erray Villa. Some excerpts regarding Henry's life, taken from his mother's letters:

February 1846: *"James and Henry have been very good to your sisters in Liverpool they made up £5 between them to put over the winter. That is, to enable them to do so"*

May 1851: *"I also wished to tell you what a fine House and place Henry has built for himself but he is a solitary man you would be surprised if you saw his place - may he long enjoy it"*

May 1852: *"...he is far from being stout as he has often attacks of a Bilious nature which is very severe. He has a very pretty and pleasant place here but he is greatly harassed with business."*

November 1852: *"Henry never writes to you nor does he to your Brother Douglas. I mentioned this to him when I was at Tobermory. He owned it and said he intended to do so and when I left I gave him both your addresses on a piece of paper and said now Henry some evening when you have no business letters to write you should write to your Brothers. He put it in his pocket and said yes I will – the truth is he writes to no body and very seldom to me. He has a very particular temper, very much taken up with his garden and grounds. He is very regular and never enters a Hotel or Public House, no never since he has lived in Tob."*

"Henry has been a very kind and a good son to me. he often sends me basketfuls of vegetables eggs and even when he kills a Pig some fresh pork. He also now allows me £30 per year and also he paid the Dr. bill for Elizabeth which was £11."

July 1853 (to son Douglas): *"I have hardly time to tell you that Henry followed your example in visiting his native place. He had business in Edin. and from thence he went direct to Kirkcudbright he was only one night there and did not make himself known to any one except Mr Duly. He went up to his Father and Brothers Burial place at 5 oclock in the morning, left per Coach at 6 in the morning and was in Glasgow at 4 in the afternoon. Henry is well and desires to be remembered to you and Mrs Nisbet."*

August 1853: *"Henry was very poorly when we left and he got worse after we were gone. He had to call in a Dr. who said it was a Bilious fever, however I had a letter this morning with my Annuity and he was greatly better. Indeed he is very subject to sudden illness. I am very much afraid he has made no settlement of his affairs and who will yonder fine place fall into – I suppose his grandson. but I hope he will long enjoy it himself. But I often think he would be much happier if he had an agreeable Wife. Erray villa is really a beautiful place, he takes great pleasure in his garden. He has plenty wall trees and all kind of flowers. He has also bought some parks near the house which he takes great pleasure in. Indeed, he has laid out a good deal of money taking in and improving Land - as for the House it might serve a Lord."*

Henry Nisbet's Death - 1867

Henry died February 9, 1867, at the age of 57, having outlived both his wife and his daughter (who died in 1850) by many years. His grandson was about 17 years old and was the primary beneficiary of his estate, which included proceeds from the sale of Erray Villa. Henry Nisbet Pritchard inherited the sum of £2,500. Henry Sr. also left £600 each to his two surviving sisters, Helen and Isabella, and the same to his wife's sister Helen Douglas Maclean. Brothers William and Douglas in America were awarded £500 each.

Scandal?

A set of biographical notes at the Mull Museum in Tobermory contains a mention of possible scandal involving Henry. Apparently, he was accused of adultery and fathering a child with a Peggy McMaster (or MacMaster). There were several Peggy McMasters living in the area at the time, including a servant with that name at the nearby Lochaline House estate at Movern. The 1841 census indicates that in addition to this Peggy McMaster, aged 30, there was a child with the same name at the house, aged 11 – possibly her daughter? Could this be Henry's daughter? There are no source notes for accusation of infidelity, and neither Henry nor his mother or siblings appear to have acknowledged an illegitimate child in their writings. But given Henry's troublesome wife, followed by a long period of bachelorhood, this bears further investigation.

The Pritchard Family

Seventeen years before her father's death and just months after her mother's death at the Edinburgh asylum, Mary Miles Fletcher Nisbet Pritchard's short life came to a sudden end on April 14, 1850. Just 18 years old, she died of consumption (tuberculosis) a few months after the birth of a child. Her infant son survived and was named after Mary's father. As we will see, this boy, Henry Nisbet Pritchard, had a troubled life ahead of him.

By May of the following year, Frances Pritchard had remarried, to Adelaide Louisa Burnett, 20, and the couple is recorded in the 1851 census as living in Portsea, England with Henry, aged 1. In later years the Pritchard family is listed with six children – half-siblings of Henry's – but he appears to have been sent to a boarding school by 1861. In the census of that year, he is listed as a scholar boarding at Montgreenan House, southwest of Glasgow. In 1871 he was at university in Edinburgh, according to further census records.

The late 1860s appear to be the time Henry Nisbet Pritchard dropped the surname of his father and became known solely as Henry Nisbet. In 1865, his father's brother, Dr. Edward Pritchard, gained notoriety as a convicted killer and was forever known as the last man to be publicly hanged in Scotland. The trial was sensational, and the doctor was convicted of poisoning his wife and mother-in-law and. The testimony included charges he had carried out affairs with servant girls and may have murdered one earlier, setting fire to his house to cover the crime. It was all quite shameful for the Pritchard family and Henry understandably wanted to distance himself from the whole affair.

Details of Henry Nisbet Pritchard's young life are largely unknown, but he did become heir to his grandfathers' home, Erray Villa in Tobermory, upon the death of Henry Nisbet in February 1867. Young Henry would have been a minor at the time, and it appears the estate was sold soon after. During his childhood, one can assume Henry Nisbet Pritchard became attached to (or felt an obligation to) his stepmother as he later left her

money in his will dated 3/24/1874. This will was part of a marriage contract drawn up the day before his wedding.



Dr. Edward Pritchard, notorious murderer, paternal uncle of Henry Nisbet Pritchard

Henry Nisbet (Pritchard) weds a troubled Eliza Jacob

On March 25, 1874, at the age of 24, young Henry married Eliza Jacob, the 24-year-old daughter of an Edinburgh furnace builder, Frederick Jacob, Esq. He had formally adopted the name Nisbet for a surname and his bride became Eliza Nisbet.

Only one record of their life in Scotland has been located, and it is an ominous one. On January 11, 1878, Eliza was admitted to Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum at Morningside. The diagnosis is unknown, but this was only the first of several stays at mental institutions for Eliza. Coincidentally, this is the same mental hospital where Henry's maternal grandmother Matilda had been taken when she went mad, and where she had died 29 years earlier.

After Eliza was discharged from Morningside, the couple followed a great number of Scottish immigrants to the South Island of New Zealand. The Nisbets used £1,500 of Henry's inheritance to purchase a tract of 320 acres at Kurow, near Duntroon, north of the city of Dunedin. The sale



Henry Nisbet (Pritchard) and Eliza Jacob near the time of their wedding in 1874

was recorded in the local Otago Daily Times on November 11, 1880, indicating they likely emigrated earlier that year.

Henry wrote in May 1881 to his lawyer in Scotland, a John Martin, Esq., saying, “ We are now comfortably settled in our new home to which we came in the middle of January. It is a four roomed cottage built of wood and nicely situated. The scenery is very fine with lofty mountains resembling that of Switzerland. Since coming here I have been busy clearing part of the land from scrub and have got 80 acres sown with wheat. I only hope that the crop will clear expenses. ...We are much pleased with the climate here. Mrs. Nisbet is well and is much taken up with household duties.”

A month earlier, Henry had placed an advertisement in the local newspaper seeking “Tenders Wanted for Ploughing.”



Mental Illness Strikes in New Zealand

In the ensuing years all did not go smoothly for the Nisbets as farmers, and in late September 1888, Henry put the farm up for sale. According to advertisements in the local papers:

“The Perpetual Trustees, Estate, and Agency Company...is instructed by Henry Nisbet, Esq. to sell by public auction...320 acres of land fenced and divided into five paddocks. The Kurow land is famed for its wheat-growing qualities, and as Mr. Nisbet has quite made up his mind to give up farming and sell out, a chance is afforded of acquiring a fair-sized farm in a good locality, at a fair value, and on easy terms.”

The reason for Henry “selling out” was most certainly that he had recently been found insane and incarcerated in a local mental hospital, Ashburn Hall. His diagnosis and length of stay at the facility is unknown, but later documents indicate he was released in 1889. Henry’s psychiatric issues put stress on his wife Eliza and her own mental illness reemerged. Soon after her husband entered Ashburn Hall, she too was institutionalized at another facility.

On August 29, 1888, Eliza was admitted to the Seacliff Lunatic Asylum located on an insolated stretch of coastline north of Dunedin. The case notes indicate she may have been transferred there from the jail where she apparently had tried to burn her fur cloak and assaulted the Matron of the Gaol. The doctor at Seacliff stated in his notes, “*her conversation is incoherent*

and at other times she is sullen and refuses to speak – said to have been previously under care at Morningside Edinburgh. Cause of present attack considered due to her Husband having recently become insane and being sent to Ashburn Hall.”

This entry in the Seacliff case book indicates that Henry’s incarceration preceded Eliza’s and his “being sent” implies he was committed against his will. Ashburn Hall was a private mental hospital at Dunedin, and it is likely the sale of the farm was needed to raise funds for his fees there. Henry would have been 38 years old at this point, almost precisely the same age as his grandmother Matilda was when she went mad and was committed at Morningside in 1849. It appears he inherited mental illness via his mother, who died so young that it may not have presented itself in her. For reasons unknown, Henry had married a woman with a serious psychiatric disorder herself.

Eliza’s stay at Seacliff lasted a little over 6 months. In September 1888, after just a few days there, her case notes state that she received a letter from a cousin of Henry and it mentioned, accurately, that her father was Mr. Fred Jacob of 14 Wardie Avenue, Edinburgh and said there was a Mr. Murdie(sp?) who appeared to be “the Nisbets’ man of business.”

Eliza was released from Seacliff on March 23, 1889, and in ensuing years appears on electoral rolls as a resident of the suburbs of Dunedin. In 1900 she is in Caversham, doing “household duties.” In 1905-06 she is still in Caversham, “married,” but without a listing for Henry. In 1911, she is in Dunedin Central, “married,” again, without a spouse listed.

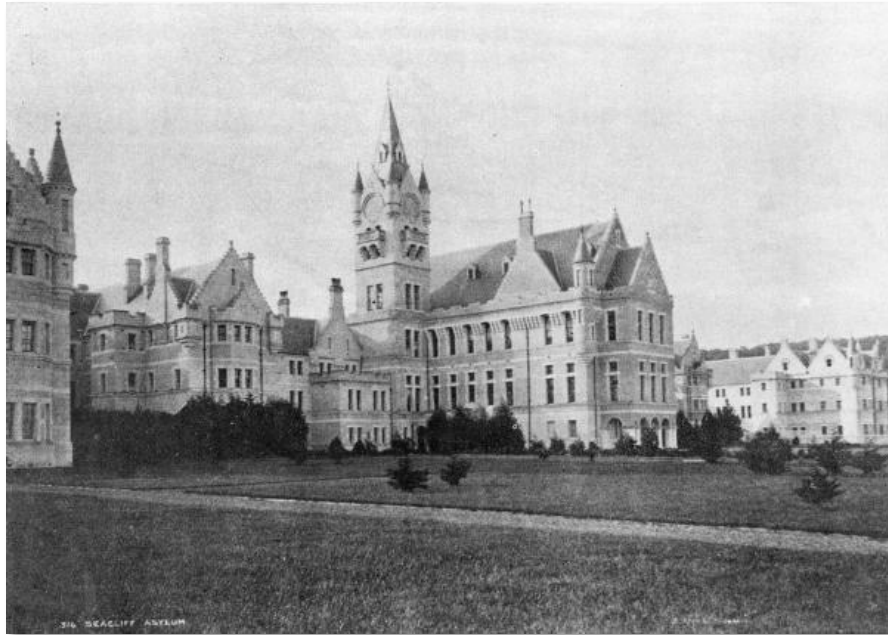
No records from Henry’s 1988 admission to Ashburn Hall has been found, but apparently, he was released the following year and spent much of the next 12 years on the margins of society, possibly mentally deficient or disabled enough to not be included with his wife on the electoral rolls.

The next official records pertaining to Henry are those showing him being admitted to Seacliff Lunatic Asylum in 1901. According to those documents, in February Henry was remanded to Seacliff by a magistrate in Invercargill, south of Dunedin. He had been examined there by two doctors who wrote formal statements certifying him “a lunatic within the meaning of this Act [The Lunatics Act Amendment], and a proper person to be taken charge of under care and treatment.”

Handwritten notations by the doctors include these:

- Facts indicating lunacy observed: *General demeanor. Incoherent speech and absence of intelligent ideas. Pays little heed to what is said to him. answers in a dreary uncertain way. Is very obstinate and requires coaxing. says he is too old to work.*
- Other Facts: *Eliza Nisbet (wife) says that he will not work and cannot settle, moves about – will not answer when spoken to, wants to go to the Old Country – and she does not know how to stop him. States that his behavior is quite different as usual and heedless - destroyed his own and his wife’s property*

These observations were enough for the magistrate to sign papers transferring him to the Seacliff Asylum, the same facility where Eliza had been a patient 12 years earlier. He was received there on February 8 by the superintendent Frederick Truby King and his file contains a photograph of Henry taken by King – quite rare among the records from Seacliff. King was a leader in his field and had a long career in public health. At Seacliff he brought innovations such as the “villa” style of treatment with smaller and more open wards.



Seacliff Lunatic Asylum circa 1890



Photo of Henry Nisbet taken upon admission to Seacliff Lunatic Asylum in 1901

Henry's admission notes at the asylum indicate he was diagnosed with dementia, cause unknown. Dr. King described him as "A dark sallow complexioned man with black hair (streaked with grey) and greyish whiskers. Features asymmetrical. Eyes brownish." Further notes include, "Patient is dull and listless and does not take a rational interest in his surroundings. From the reports, patient has evidently been of weak mind for some years past. His account of himself is rambling and without point. His mental grasp is dull, and he will often sit motionless without attempting to answer your questions and when he does answer it is in an incoherent fashion. he does not seem to object to having been placed in an asylum." A brief note made a year later reports Henry is "Depressed. Silent. Solitary. Unchanged. Tidy in habits."

Two months after his admission, Eliza completed a lengthy form answering questions about her husband. Notably, when asked about a family history of mental illness, Eliza wrote "Could not say," implying she was either unaware of his grandmother's fate or unwilling to admit it. Some other interesting excerpts from the form:

Was the patient originally dull or clever?	<i>Dull</i>
Had he good power of self-control?	<i>No</i>
Was he nervous, excitable or hot-tempered?	<i>Nervous</i>
Was he affectionate?	<i>At one time – not of late years</i>
Was he energetic and industrious?	<i>Yes</i>
Has he led a solitary life?	<i>Has always been inclined for being alone</i>
Has patient... been absent-minded...?"	<i>Very absent minded for the last 10 years and took no interest in anything or anyone</i>
Was patient specially strange or eccentric before becoming actually insane...?"	<i>Has actually burned and destroyed things, cut the name out of articles of clothing, so much so that it was thought by friends he should be placed under restraint, as I could not control him. I could not be answerable for what he did.</i>
If patient has been insane before, give dates...	<i>In 1888 and 1889</i>
To what causes do you attribute patient's insanity?	<i>Possibly over work on Crown Land and over anxiety which may not have affected a person with a stronger brain, his brain having always been weak. I may say that he is fond of and has a knowledge of gardening and can prune fruit trees. He is also fond of chopping and sawing wood and I do hope he has found some pursuit to occupy himself with.</i>

Henry's Death - 1914

Henry was to remain at Seacliff for the remainder of his life, but with one brief exception. In August 1904, he apparently escaped from the facility for a few hours one afternoon. Upon being caught and returned, the report says he *"gave as reason that he 'wanted a change because it was a fine day.' Says he will not go again."* No other notations appear in Henry's record until the day he died, July 12, 1914. He was 64. The causes of death were given as 1. Senile Decay and 2. Heart Failure. Henry Nisbet was buried at Andersons Bay Cemetery in Dunedin.

Eliza's Final Years

Following her stay at Seacliff in 1888-89, there is no record of Eliza Nisbet receiving further treatment. However, it is known that she reentered Seacliff as a patient at some point, possibly around 1921. Cemetery records show that she died at Seacliff on July 25, 1922, at age 67. Like her husband, she was buried at Andersons Bay Cemetery south of Dunedin, though in a different section of the burial grounds.

In 1924 her published probate record in Edinburgh confirms she was an inmate of a branch Seacliff at Waitati and had died there, intestate. Her personal effects were granted to the Public Trustee of New Zealand, and it was noted the value of her estate in Scotland was £264:13:10 (pounds:shillings:pence).

Finally at Rest

In 1926 a court-appointed trustee collected together all available information on the Nisbets so as to make a final determination on the disposition of their estate. His report summarized the pertinent facts and found that upon Henry Nisbet's death in 1914, "no enquiries were made to ascertain if he had left a will...but upon the death of Eliza Nisbet the question arose as to the person or persons who were entitled to receive the settled fund." Lengthy searches turned up Henry's original will dated March 24, 1874 and two codicils executed the following year. All executors named in the documents were no longer living and the public trustee took on the task of disposing of assets, which were noted to be under £1,750. Henry had named a number of individuals to receive legacies from his estate, but by this time most of them were deceased. There is no record of how the public trustee in New Zealand disbursed the funds, but if he followed the letter of the will, then any surviving children of his stepmother, his half-siblings, would have received an unexpected windfall.

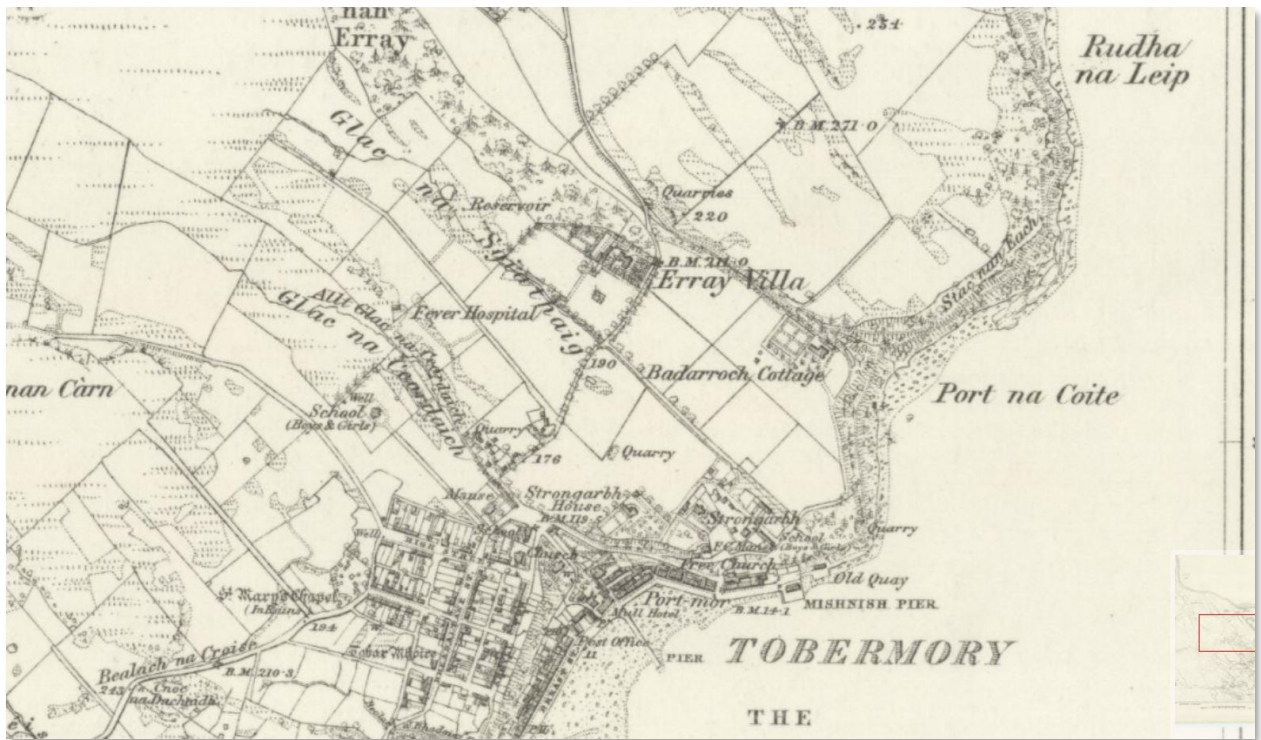
No record of any children of Henry and Eliza has been found, and given the mental issues of the parents, that is probably a good thing. They had both led a troubled life – Henry losing his mother at birth and then developing serious psychiatric issues, Eliza dealing with her own lifelong

mental health challenges. They both now rest in peace on a windy seaside bluff overlooking the Southern Ocean.

And this, it appears, is the sad end of the ill-fated Henry Nisbet branch of the Nisbet family tree.

Author's Note: I have copies of Henry's will, codicils, and many other pertinent documents beyond what is contained in the following Appendix. These are stored digitally in the Henry Nisbet folder, within the Nisbet folder in my archives. -- Ian Ross

Appendix -Selected Documents



1. Old map of Tobermory showing Erray Villa north of the village



2. Erray Villa as it appears today. It has been renamed Cannongate.

At 158, Hill Street, Garnethill, Glasgow, on the 18th current,
 MRS RICHARD BELL, of a son.
MARRIED.
 At Preston Cottage, on the 15th current, by the Rev. James
 Kirkwood, Edinburgh, the Rev. A. J. Gunnion, of the United
 Presbyterian Church, Hawick, to AGNES, daughter of William
 Hume, Esq. Edinburgh.
 At Tobermory, Island of Mull, on the 15th current, FRANCIS
 B. PRITCHARD, Esq. surgeon, Royal Navy, to MARY MILES FLETCHER,
 only daughter of Henry Nisbet, Esq. banker.

- July 22, 1847 announcement in the Caledonian Mercury regarding marriage of Mary Miles Fletcher Nisbet to Francis Bowen Pritchard

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Portsea Island Union</i>									
Registrar's District <i>Kingston and Landport</i>									
1847. DEATHS in the District of <i>Kingston and Landport</i> in the County of <i>Southampton</i>									
No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
366	<i>15th April 1850</i>	<i>Mary Miles Fletcher Pritchard</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>18 years</i>	<i>Wife of Francis Bowen Pritchard Surgeon Royal Navy</i>	<i>Infantary</i>	<i>North Down</i> <i>Wife of</i> <i>Presented the Death</i> <i>Notice</i> <i>to the</i> <i>Registrar</i>	<i>15th April 1850</i>	<i>Greenfield Williams</i> <i>Registrar</i>

- Death certificate for Mary Miles Fletcher Pritchard showing she died April 15, 1850 aged 18. This is shortly after she gave birth to a son they named Henry.

Parish or Township of <i>Portsea</i>		Ecclesiastical District of <i>St. Andrew</i>		City or Borough of <i>Portsmouth</i>		County of <i>Hants</i>		Village or Hamlet of <i>Buckland</i>	
Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether married	Whether single
				Male	Female				
<i>B. Buckland B.</i>	<i>Francis B. Pritchard</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>36</i>		<i>Surgeon R.M. Salt Water</i>	<i>North Down</i>		
	<i>Adelaide</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Mar.</i>		<i>18</i>		<i>do</i>		
	<i>Henry</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Unm.</i>		<i>1</i>		<i>do</i>		
<i>H. Buckland B.</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Unm.</i>	<i>10</i>		<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Portsmouth</i>		

- 1851 Census record of Francis Pritchard and new wife Adelaide with son Henry, aged 1 living at Portsea, England

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1874. MARRIAGES in the District of *Saint Giles* in the City of *Edinburgh*

No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signatures of Parties. Rank of Profession, whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signatures of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree of Nullity, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
87	1874. on the twenty fifth day of March at the Royal Edinburgh Asylum Edinburgh	<i>Signed</i> <i>Henry Nisbet</i> <i>Henry Nisbet</i> Bachelor	24	50 Cumberland Street Edinburgh	<i>Signed</i> <i>James Robert Nisbet</i> <i>James Robert Nisbet</i> Surgeon Royal Navy, and Edinburgh	<i>Signed</i> <i>William Barber</i> <i>William Barber</i> Edinburgh	1874. March 26th Edinburgh
	After being according to the terms of the Marriage Act of 1845	<i>Signed</i> <i>Eliza Jacob</i> <i>Eliza Jacob</i> Spinster	24	141 Hardie Avenue Edinburgh	<i>Signed</i> <i>Frederick Jacob</i> <i>Frederick Jacob</i> Builder and Edinburgh	<i>Signed</i> <i>James Jacob</i> <i>James Jacob</i> Edinburgh	1874. March 26th Edinburgh

6. 1874 marriage record for Henry Nisbet and Eliza Jacob

Eliza Jacob
in the Web: Scotland, General and Admission Registers for Asylums, 1858-1918

Detail Source

Name: Eliza Jacob
[Eliza Nisbet]

Admission Date: 11 Jan 1878

Institution: Royal Edinburgh Asylum

Admission Place: Midlothian, Scotland

Patient Number: 31196

Register Type: General Register

NRS Reference: MC7/4 p. 197

URL: <https://www.scottishindexes.com/mcscript.aspx?mcrid=419710>

This record is not from Ancestry and will open in a new window.

Write a comment

Make a Connection
[Find others](#) who are resea
Public Member Trees.

7. 1878 record of Eliza's admission to the Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum at Morningside

... of ... down in the list furnished to the auctioneer.

In the case of sec. 6, Block XI, Oamaru, a bidder, whose proffered bid of £1 in advance was refused, stated in court that it was his intention to contest the legality of the refusal.

	Per Acre.
Section 57, block 8, Otepopo, 45a., 1r. 7p., F. Eley ...	£1 5 0
Section 11, block 1, Kurow, 320 a., Christian Hillo ...	1 1 0
Section 11, block 2, Kurow, 220 a., J. M'Gimpsey ...	1 10 0
Section 15, block 2, Kurow, 192 a., Jas. Scott ...	1 15 0
Section 1, block 3, Kurow, 320 a., H. Nisbet ...	2 7 6
Section 5, block 3, Kurow, 189 a., B. Campbell ...	1 12 6

8. Nov. 11, 1880 Otago Times listing of land sales showing Henry Nisbet purchased 320 acres in the Kurow area of New Zealand

The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

ROBT. GARROW,
Clerk to Board.
Oamaru, 6th April, 1881. al7

TENDERS WANTED, for PLOUGHING

Sixty or Seventy Acres of Land, near
Kurow. Apply to

HENRY NISBET,
al7 Kurow, by Dunroon.

£1 REWARD will be given to any person giving information as to the whereabouts of a light draught BLACK MARK, with white star on forehead; shod on fore feet; no brand; which strayed from Kakanui about the 27th March.

KENNETH MATHESON,
al4 Kakanui.

9. April 7, 1881 Otago Times advertisement for plowing help

THURSDAY, 4th OCTOBER,
At 1 o'clock.

FREEHOLD FARM, KUROW DISTRICT.

THE PERPETUAL TRUSTEES, ESTATE, AND AGENCY COMPANY OF NEW ZEALAND (LIMITED) is instructed by Henry Nisbet, Esq., who has decided to give up farming, to sell by public auction on the property, almost adjoining Strachan's siding, on the Oamaru-Kurow railway, on Thursday, 4th October, at 1 o'clock—

Section 1, Block III, Kurow district, containing 320 acres of land fenced and subdivided into five paddocks. One hundred and five acres have been broken up, of which three acres are garden and orchard, 48 acres in English grasses, and 54 acres in autumn-sown wheat. The balance of the land is in its natural state, nearly one half of which could be cultivated, the remainder being good rough pasture. The buildings comprise five-roomed house, wash-house, stockyard, and other out-buildings, and are in good condition, being comparatively new.

The Kurow land is famed for its wheat-growing qualities, and as Mr Nisbet has quite made up his mind to give up farming and to sell out, a chance is afforded of acquiring a fair-sized farm in a good locality, at its fair value, and on easy terms. Post office and school adjoin this farm.

The Auctioneer is also instructed to sell on the same day, the whole of the sheep, cattle, implements, and household furniture.

For further particulars apply to Mr William Barrie, on the property; to Mr George R. Hislop, commission agent, Oamaru; or at the offices of

THE AUCTIONEERS,
Rattray street, Dunedin.

21s

10. Sept. 26, 1880 Otago Times advertisement for sale of Henry Nisbet farm.

503

Eliza Nisbet at 40 yrs adn Aug^t 29th 1888

Mania Bt impaired C Min.

Aug^t 29th 1888 - Certificates state she has a very excitable manner but will not answer or speak. Tried to burn her fur cloak and assaulted the Matron of the Asyl.

Dr. Lauder states that her conversation is incoherent and at other times she is sullen and refuses to speak.

Said to have been previously under care at Thornhillside Edinburgh - 1

Cause of present attack considered due to her Husband having recently become insane and being sent to Ashburn Hall -

Sept^r 3rd 1888 - A letter from a cousin of Mr. Nisbet's arrived on 1st inst from wh^{ch} it appears Mr. N. wrote an intelligent letter on 25th ult. Father Mr. Fred Jacob 14 Wardie Avenue Edinburgh Scotland - Mr. Nisbet appears from the cousin's letter to be the Nisbet's 'man' of business -

Sept^r 4th 1888 Did not sleep well last night - Has taken a fair amount of liquid food through the day -

Sept^r 17th 1888 - Is eating much better during last three days - slept well last night -

Sept^r 22nd 1888 - Eating well and decidedly improved - Will not yet answer any of my questions or indeed engage in any conversation -

23. 3. 89

Wt an admission of st of th now 8 st 7 lbs - I think there is some mistake here since she certainly looks to me stouter than when admitted -

Wch 23/89 Dischd.

Patient's No. *Paper sent* Name in full: *Henry Nisbet*

Committed on order of *Ernest L. McCarty*

At *Seacliff*

Date of committal: *6th February 1901*

Sex: *Male*

Age: *51 years*

Married, single, or widowed: *Married*

Condition of life or occupation: *Farmer*

Religion: *Presbyterian*

Previous place of abode: *Dunedin*

Whether first attack: *No*

Age, first attack: *34 years*

When and where previously treated: *Seaburn Hall*

Duration of existing attack: *12 years*

Supposed cause: *Not known*

Whether subject to epilepsy: *No*

If suicidal or dangerous: *Has threatened*

Names of relatives and address: *Elija Nisbet - wife.*

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES.

Date.	Weight on Admission.		
	St.	Lb.	
			Dr Campbell Says little heed to what is said to him answers in a dreary uncertain way. Is very obstinate & requires coaxing Says he is too old to work
			Elija Nisbet (Wife), Says that he will not work cannot settle down about, will not answer when spoken to, wants to go to the Old Country, she does not know how to stop him
			Dr Macleod General demeanour. incoherent speech absence of intelligent ideas
			Elija Nisbet his wife states that his behaviour is quite different to usual & heedlessly destroyed his own & his wife's property

12. 1901 admission record for Henry Nisbet at Seacliff

Report upon Patient Henry Nisbet by Mr Nisbet What relation? Husband

I. Have any relations been subject to epilepsy, hysterical attacks, sick headaches, severe neuralgia, St. Vitus's dance, asthma, consumption, or severe rheumatism?

Could not say

II. Have any relations been strange or eccentric in manner, or actually insane? State temperament of each parent; whether nervous, hot-tempered, and excitable, or the reverse.

Could not say

III. Have any relations been addicted to excessive drinking, or other vices?

Not that I know of

IV. Where was patient born?

England

How long resident in New Zealand?

21 years

State if patient has resided in other countries, and, if so, for how long.

Dull

Was patient originally dull or clever?

Had not the ability to do so

How was he as regards power of applying himself to any study, and concentrating his mind on it?

Yes

Had he a good memory?

Yes

Had he a strong will?

No

Had he good power of self-control?

Nervous

Was he nervous, excitable, or hot-tempered?

Shy & retiring

Was he shy and retiring, or self-possessed, and fond of company?

at one time - not of late years

Was he affectionate?

Farming 8 or 9 years

What occupation did he follow, and for how long?

Yes

Was he energetic and industrious?

He spent himself diligently & kept to his farming pursuits

Did he stick long at one job, or was he inclined to be shifty?

Active

Was he active or sedentary in his habits?

He might have had few strokes

Has he been addicted to drinking or other vices?

Modest health very good

Has he sustained any severe accident or injury to head?

No

Has he ever had sunstroke?

Not bodily

Has his bodily health been usually good?

Yes

Has he been habitually troubled with any bodily disorder?

No

Has he been in ill-health of late?

Yes

V. Describe any changes you may have noticed in patient as regards any of the above particulars.

1. At puberty, or since then but prior to a year ago.

2. Recently, or during the last year.

VI. Has patient had any obvious cause for anxiety or grief?

Was a shareholder in life of Glasgow Bank

Has he led a solitary life, and, if so, when, and for how long?

Has always been inclined for being alone

If married, has he any family?

No family

VII. Has patient at any period of life been absent-minded or melancholy? If so, at what ages, and for how long?

Very absent minded for the last 10 years & took no interest in anything or anyone

VIII. Was patient specially strange or eccentric before becoming actually insane, and, if so, in what way, and for how long? Describe any changes you have noted in manner, habits, or religious tendencies. Has he been sleeping badly? Note the first delusions you observed, and subsequent ones. Has there been anything in patient's statements, manner, or actions which would indicate a tendency to suicide or homicide?

Has actually burnt & destroyed things, but the name out of articles of clothing so much so that it has thought by friends he should be placed under restraint, as I could not control him & could not remain operative for what he did

IX. Has the patient undergone any previous treatment, and, if so, of what nature, and by whom? Has he been subjected to restraint?

Has been in Asylum Hall might have had suicidal tendencies at that time

X. If patient has been insane before, give the dates, causes, and nature of previous attacks, so far as these may be known to you.

In 1888 & 1889

XI. To what causes do you attribute patient's insanity?

Possibly over work or overland & over anxiety which may have affected a person with a stronger brain, his brain having always been weak

II. If a female patient, please state—

At what age did menstruation commence?

Has patient been always regular? If not, give details.

Has menstruation ceased? If so, for how long?

Is patient pregnant?

Has she had children? How many, and within what period?

When was last born?

Did symptoms of insanity occur during these times or during nursing?

I may say that he is fond of & has a knowledge of gardening & can prune fruit trees

He is also fond of chopping & drawing wood & I do hope he has found some pursuit to occupy himself with

Signature: E. Nisbet

Date: 28 March 1901

13. March 1901 form completed by Eliza Nisbet after Henry's incarceration at Seacliff

ANDERSONS BAY CEMETERY (EASTERN NECROPOLIS) DUNEDIN			153
BURIAL REGISTER			MAY 1867 - DEC 1920
1905	NIKEL CONSTANCE MARY	(class 2) Lot 11 Block 29	
	Died APR 9 1915. Aged 52 years.		
1635	NISBET HENRY	(class 1) Lot 18 Block 26	
	Died JUL 12 1914. Aged 64 years. Resident of INVERCARGILL.		
4383	NIVEN ANNIE	(class 1) Lot 131 Block 26	
	Died SEP 28 1920. Aged 76 years.		
2334	NIVEN JAMES	(class 1) Lot 131 Block 26	
	Died MAY 31 1916. Aged 77 years.		
1678	NOBLE JAMES	(class 1) Lot 40 Block 23	
	Died AUG 23 1914. Aged 42 years.		
4214	NOHAR WILLIAM	(class 2) Lot 46 Block 25	

14. 1914 burial record for Henry Nisbet

ANDERSONS BAY CEMETERY, DUNEDIN, OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND.		page 455
BURIAL REGISTER. Volume 2. 1917 - 1923		
5184.	EDWARDS Joseph	5184.
	Died 25 Jul 1922, aged 65 years, a newspaper canvasser. Resident of Chalet Hospital. Born Nelson. Last came from 436 North Road. Lived 65 years in province. Buried 27 Jul. (Church of England)	Blk 21 Plot 102 Class 1
	Informant: Hugh Gourley.	
5185.	NISBET Eliza	5185.
	Died 25 Jul 1922, aged 67 years, widow. Resident of Mental Hospital Seacliff. Buried 27 Jul. (Presbyterian)	Blk 26 Plot 18 Class 1
	Informant: Hugh Gourley.	
5186.	GEORGE Jessie Ann	5186.
	Died 26 Jul 1922, aged 49 years, widow. Resident of Dunedin Hospital. Born Christchurch. Last came from 76 Fawcett Street. Lived 49 years in province.	Blk 3 Plot 140 Class 2

15. 1922 burial record for Eliza Nisbet