

## 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.



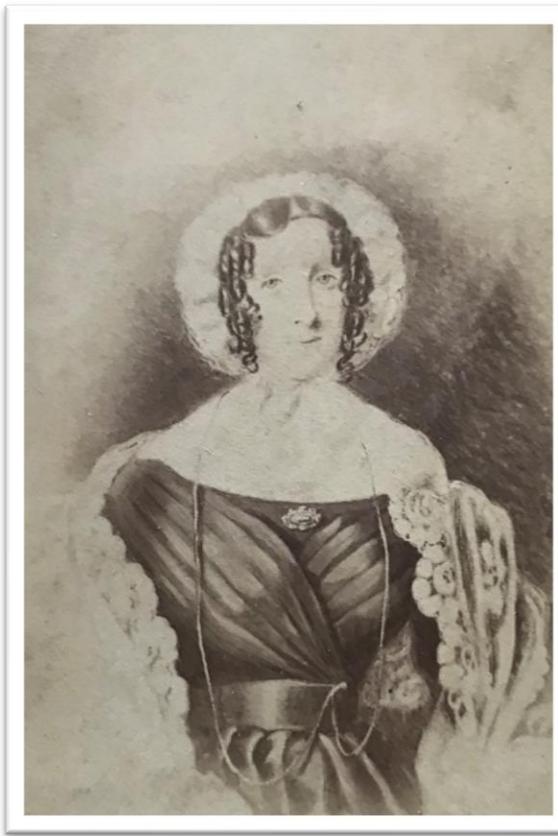
**Erray Villa circa 1868**



**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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 nobody 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 o'clock 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 Anuity 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 Dunroon, north of the city of Dunedin. The sale

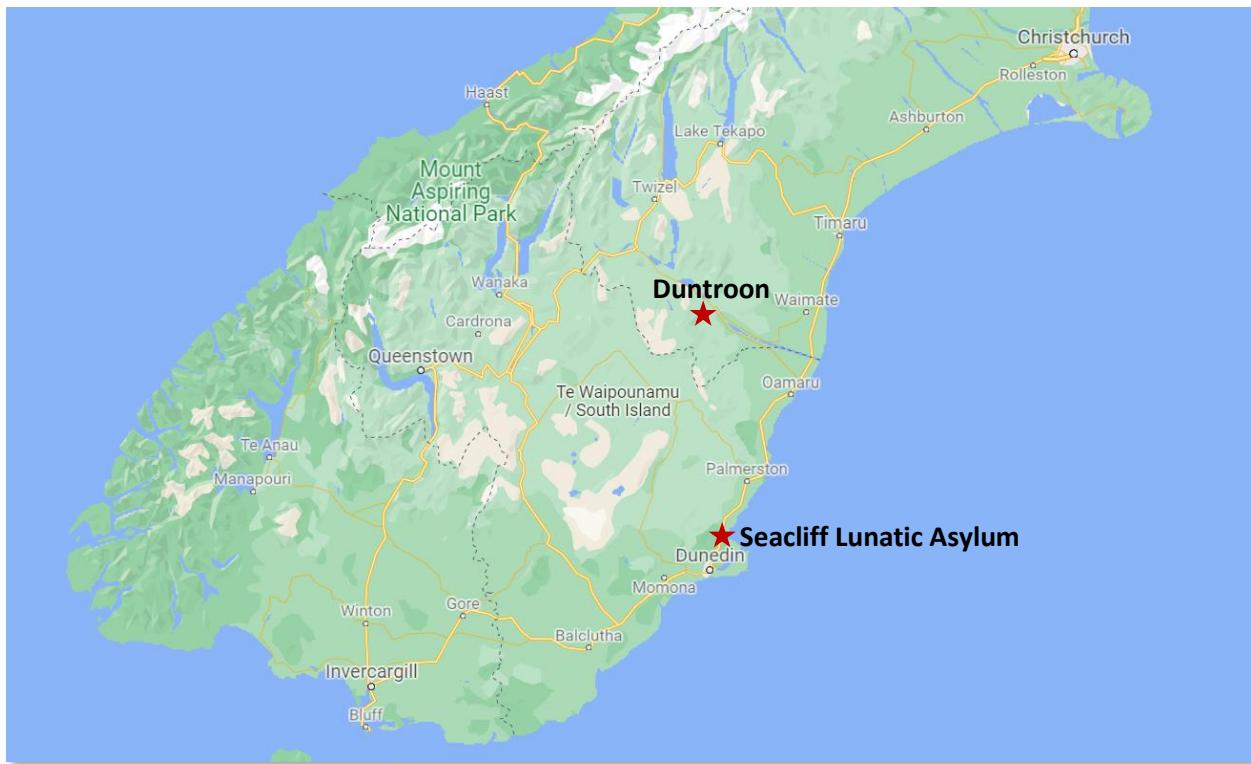


**Henry Nisbet (Pritchard) and Eliza Jacob near the time of their wedding in 1874**

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 1888 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>
	<i>I may say that he is fond of and has a knowledge of gardening and can prune fruit trees.</i>
	<i>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.

M A R R I E D.

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.

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

1850. DEATHS in the District of <u>Portsea Island Union</u> in the County of <u>Southampton</u>									
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	April 1850	Mary Miles Fletcher Pritchard	Female	18 years	Wife of Francis Bowen Pritchard Surgeon Royal Navy	Labourer, Prolonged confinement of the womb	Southsea Hospital	April 1850	William Fletcher Registrar

4. 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 <u>Portsea</u>		Ecclesiastical District of <u>St. Saviour's</u>		City or Borough of <u>Portsmouth</u>		County of <u>Hampshire</u>		Village of <u>Buckland</u>	
Rank	Number	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person to abide in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of Male / Female	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Imported from
B.	Buckland Rd	James B. Pritchard	Head	Male	Dead	38	Surgeon R.N. & Surgeon	Southsea	
		Adelaide do	Wife	Female	Dead			do	do
		Henry do	Son	Male	Dead			do	do
A.	Buckland Rd	W. J. T.	Wife	Female	Dead	40	Resident Minister	St. Saviour's	

5. 1851 Census record of Francis Pritchard and new wife Adelaide with son Henry, aged 1 living at Portsea, England

Page 44  
1871. MARRIAGES in the District of Saint Giles in the City of Edinburgh

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signatures of Parties. Rank or 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 Witness (If Irregular, Date of Contract, Decree or Declaration, or Sheriff's Warrant), and Name & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
	87	1871, on the twenty-fifth day of March at the Union Methodist Chapel in Edinburgh	Signed Henry Nisbet Henry Nisbet Bachelor	24	50 Cupperton Shore Edinburgh	James Currie Bitchell Surgeon Royal Navy, and Henry Nisbet Bitchell Bachelor deceased	Signed William Parker Edinburgh
		After an enquiry according to the books of the New Year Methodist Church	Signed Eliza Jacob Spinster	24	104 Wardie Avenue Edinburgh	Frederick Jacob Builder and Anne Jacob Mrs. Wardie	Eliza Jacob Edinburgh 19.3.82

## 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: <a href="https://www.scottishindexes.com/mcrtr.aspx?mcrid=419710">https://www.scottishindexes.com/mcrtr.aspx?mcrid=419710</a>	

① This record is not from Ancestry and will open in a new window.

Write a comment

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

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.,	£1 5 0
1r. 7p., F. Eley	...
Section 11, block 1, Kurow, 320	1 1 0
a., Christian Hill	...
Section 11, block 2, Kurow, 220	1 10 0
a., J. M'Gimpsey	...
Section 15, block 2, Kurow, 192	1 15 0
a., Jas. Scott	...
Section 1, block 3, Kurow, 320	2 7 6
a., H. Nisbet	...
Section 5, block 3, Kurow, 180	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

**T**ENDERS WANTED, for PLOUGHING  
 Sixty or Seventy Acres of Land, near  
 Kurow. Apply to  
**HENRY NISBET,**  
 Kurow, by Duntrroon.  
al7  
**£1** REWARD will be given to any  
 person giving information as to the  
 whereabouts of a light draught BLACK  
 MARL, with white tuft on forehead ; shod  
 on fore feet ; no brand : which strayed from  
 Kakanui about the 27th March.  
 KENNETH MATHESON,  
 Kakanui.  
al4

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

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

### FREEHOLD FARM, KUROW DISTRICT

**T**HE PERPETUAL TRUSTEES, ESTATE,  
 AND AGENCY COMPANY OF NEW  
 ZEALAND (LIMITED) is instructed by Henry  
 Nisbet, Esq., who has decided to give up farm-  
 ing, 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, con-  
 taining 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 build-  
 ings comprise five-roomed house, wash-  
 house, stockyard, and other out-build-  
 ings, and are in good condition, being  
 comparatively new.

The Kurow land is famed for its wheat-grow-  
 ing 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.

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

503

Eliza Nisbet at 40 yrs adm Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 1888

Mania Btt unspured C thin

Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 1888 - Certificate 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 Gaol -

Dr Lauton 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 Morningside Edinburgh - 1

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

Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 1888 - A letter from a cousin of Mrs Nisbet's arrived on 1<sup>st</sup> inst from wh<sup>ch</sup> it appears Mrs N wrote an intelligent letter on 25<sup>th</sup> ult. Father Mr Fred Jacob 14 Warie Avenue Edinburgh Scotland - Mr Purdie appears from the cousin's letter to be the Nisbets' man of business -

Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 1888 Did not sleep well last night - Has taken a few sips of liquid food through the day -

Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 1888 - Is eating much better during last three days - slept well last night -

Sept 1<sup>st</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> 1888 - Eating well and decidedly improved - Will not yet answer any of my questions or indeed engage in any conversation -

23. 3. 89

At an admission of 1<sup>st</sup> of the new fort 7 lbs - I think there is some mistake here since she certainly looks to me stouter than when admitted -

March 23/1889 Discharged.

11. 1888-1889 case book from Seacliff Lunatic Asylum regarding Eliza Nisbet

Patient's No.	Paper sheet		Name in full:	Henry Nisbet
Committed on order of			Ernest J. McCarthy	
At			St. Asaph	
Date of committal:			6th February 1901	
Sex:			Male	
Age:			51 years	
Married, single, or widowed:			Married	
Condition of life or occupation:			Farmer	
Religion:			Protestant	
Previous place of abode:			Dunedin	
Whether first attack:			No	
Age, first attack:			34 years	
When and where previously treated:			Aldham 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:			Eliza Nisbet - wife	

MEDICAL CERTIFICATES.

Date.	Weight on Admission.		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	
St.	Lb.			

Date.	Progressive Weights.		Eliza Nisbet (wife) says that he will not work Cannot settle moves about, will not answer when spoken to, wants to go to the dead country, she does not know how to stop him	
St.	Lb.			

Date.	Progressive Weights.		Dr. Macleod general demeanour. incoherent speech absence of intelligent ideas Eliza Nisbet his wife states that his behaviour is quite different to usual & heedlessly destroyed his own & his wife's property	
St.	Lb.			

12. 1901 admission record for Henry Nisbet at Seacliff

<p>Report upon Patient <u>Henry Nisbet</u> by <u>Eliza Nisbet</u></p> <p>I. Have any relations been subject to epilepsy, hysterical attacks, sick headaches, severe neuralgia, St. Vitus's dance, asthma, consumption, or severe rheumatism? <u>Could not say</u></p> <p>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. <u>Could not say</u></p> <p>III. Has any relation been addicted to excessive drinking, or other vices? <u>Not that I know of</u></p> <p>IV. Where was patient born? <u>England</u> How long resident in New Zealand? <u>21 years</u> State if patient has resided in other countries, and, if so, for how long? <u>Dull</u> Was patient originally dull or clever? <u>Had not the ability to do so</u> How was he as regards power of applying himself to any study, and concentrating his mind on it? <u>Yes</u> Has he a good memory? <u>If prouised</u> Has he a strong will? <u>No</u> Has he good power of self-control? <u>Nervous</u> Was he nervous, excitable, or hot-tempered? <u>Shy &amp; retiring</u> Was he shy and retiring, or self-possessed, and fond of company? <u>At one time - not of late years</u> Was he affectionate? <u>Farming 8 or 9 years</u> What occupation did he follow, and for how long? <u>He applied himself diligently to his farmy pursuits</u> Was he energetic and industrious? <u>Yes</u> Did he stick long at one job, or was he inclined to be shiftless? <u>He applied himself diligently to his farmy pursuits</u> Was he active or sedentary in his habits? <u>No</u> Has he been addicted to drinking or other vices? <u>Active</u> Has he sustained any severe accident or injury to head? <u>Might have had few strokes</u> Has he ever had sunstroke? <u>Bodily health very good</u> Has his bodily health been usually good? <u>Yes</u> Has he been habitually troubled with any bodily disorder? <u>Art bodily</u> Has he been in ill-health of late? <u>None</u> V. Does any change 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? <u>None</u> Has he led a solitary life, and, if so, when, and for how long? <u>None</u> If married, has he any family? <u>No family</u> </p>		<p>What relation? <u>Husband</u></p> <p>VII. Has patient at any period of life been absent-minded or melancholy? If so, at what ages, and for how long? <u>Very absent minded for the last 10 years &amp; to no interest in anything or anyone</u></p> <p>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 noticed in manner, habits, or religious tendencies. Has he been subject to fits? Has the patient been 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? <u>Has actually burnt &amp; destroyed things, but the name not of articles of clothing, to much so that it was thought by friends he had been placed under restraint, as he had not control over &amp; could not be responsible for what he did</u></p> <p>IX. Has the patient undergone any previous treatment, and, if so, of what nature, and by whom? Has he been subjected to restraint? <u>Has been in Ashburton Hall might have had suicidal tendencies at that time</u></p> <p>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. <u>In 1888 &amp; 1889</u></p> <p>XI. To what causes do you attribute patient's insanity? <u>Possibly over work or over load &amp; over anxiety which may have affected a person with a stronger brain, his brain having always been weak</u></p> <p>If a female patient, please state—</p> <p>II. At what age did menstruation commence? <u>I may say that he is fond of &amp; has a knowledge of pruning &amp; can prune fruit trees</u> Has patient been always regular? If not, give details. <u>He is also fond of chopping &amp; sawing wood &amp; I do hope he has found some pursuit to occupy himself with</u> Has menstruation ceased? If so, for how long? <u>None</u> Is patient pregnant? <u>None</u> Has she had children? How many, and within what period? <u>None</u> When was last born? <u>None</u> Did symptoms of insanity occur during these times or during nursing? <u>None</u></p> <p>Signature: <u>E. Nisbet</u> Date: <u>20 March 1901</u></p>
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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 45 Block 55

#### 14. 1914 burial record for Henry Nisbet

ANDERSONS BAY CEMETERY, DUNEDIN, OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND. BURIAL REGISTER. Volume 2. 1917 - 1923		page 455
5184.	EDWARDS Joseph	5184. Blk 21 Plot 102 Class 1
	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)	
	Informant: Hugh Gourley.	
5185.	NISBET Eliza	5185. Blk 26 Plot 18 Class 1
	Died 25 Jul 1922, aged 67 years, widow. Resident of Mental Hospital Seacliff.	
	Buried 27 Jul. (Presbyterian)	
	Informant: Hugh Gourley.	
5186.	GEORGE Jessie Ann	5186. Blk 3 Plot 140 Class 2
	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.	

#### 15. 1922 burial record for Eliza Nisbet