

My Great Great Grandmother, Her Scandalous Husband and Spiritualism in 19thC Melbourne

By Samantha Battams ©2019

My forebear Elizabeth Abbott (nee Heslop) had an interesting life, living in three countries, being a bigamist and having a central role in a scandalous case that featured prominently in early 19thC Victorian newspapers. I am descended from her first husband, Charles Miller, a seafarer whom she left after being briefly married. Her second husband, Albert Abbott, was a philanderer who would become one of the greatest charlatans in Melbourne and Sydney at the end of the 19th and early 20th century. This story is an intriguing case about clairvoyance and shonky spiritualism in Melbourne. It even involves Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, writer of the Sherlock Holmes series, who weighed in on his views on Abbott's associate Annie Turner when he toured Australia!

Elizabeth was 19 years old when she travelled from the United Kingdom to Lyttelton, New Zealand with her parents George and Jane Heslop (nee Kitchener) on the ship *Zealanda* in November 1859, a ship that brought 360 government assisted migrants to their new home. Elizabeth was the second of five children that arrived, with two brothers arriving later. One of those brothers, Mowbray, would live in New Zealand before abandoning his wife there, remarrying in America and creating a new life as a Doctor/Surgeon and then photographer – though how he came to reach this lofty status from his background as an apprentice bootmaker in the UK and a photographer in NZ is unknown. The period appeared to enable charlatans to be self-proclaimed in their chosen profession.

The Heslop family was from Durham, England, with father George Heslop originally from Yorkshire (his father a miner) and his wife Jane Kitchener from Sussex. George was a Currier, a specialist in the leather processing industry, and a boot and shoe merchant. Elizabeth was a Dressmaker, as were her sisters Maria and Charlotte – the girls were among the few women with a skilled trade on the ship.

Elizabeth must have wondered about her chances of meeting a Colonist or future husband aboard the ship and her marriage prospects in New Zealand. It was a long 7 years after her arrival that Elizabeth would find a suitor: she was a relatively old 26 years when she married Charles Miller, a 'Master Mariner', said to be born in Scotland.¹ Miller was the captain of her father's boat, *Maid of the Mill*, a ketch which frequently travelled between Kaiapoi and Lyttelton.

Charles was a widow who had previously married in 1865. His first wife had died shortly after from pneumonia, leaving behind a young baby, who was left behind with Charles's in-laws. Just a year and three months later, Charles married Elizabeth, in the Heslop home. But less than 8 months later, Charles placed an advertisement in the *Press* newspaper of 6th May 1867 that read:

My Wife Elizabeth Miller nee Heslop, having been induced to leave her home without cause, I hereby give notice that I will not be responsible for any debt she may incur, either in her own or my name.

Charles Miller, May 3, 1867

There was likely good reason for Elizabeth leaving her husband. Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant when she left Charles and she had a son, George Heslop, on 21st August 1867 (my great-great grandfather).

The Heslop family had settled in Lyttelton and George Heslop senior started off as Merchant and then became a Draper. In 1861 he took over the estate of a bankrupt man who was a Tanner assigned to him. However, George would also have his fair share of bad luck. In 1870 there was a large fire in Lyttelton which led to the damage of much of George's drapery stock. Shortly after, he placed a newspaper advertisement titled 'Lyttelton Fire', informing the public that he had rented out two shops to '*dispose of the goods saved from the wreck. They will be cleared out at low prices, more or less injured.*' In 1870 the ketch which he co-owned was also advertised for sale. During the 1870 fire, a number of items were also stolen from him – in 1872 he sued a woman for having his 'punch bowl,' but the case was dismissed, and the woman given the benefit of the doubt. The Lyttelton fire was soon followed by the bankruptcy of George Heslop, filed in October 1875 when he was living in Christchurch. He sold by public auction the goods of his drapery business, whilst the lease of his shop at Yorkshire House was auctioned in January 1876.

Did Elizabeth Heslop go back to Charles, spurred on by her father's bankruptcy and inability to financially support herself and her child, or did Charles briefly re-enter the scene? In August 1876, a Charles Miller was accused of assaulting his wife, with the case being 'dismissed with a caution.' At this time, Elizabeth was already living with Albert James Abbott – Elizabeth later said that they resided together two months before their marriage – so perhaps Charles Miller discovered this and confronted her. Albert would later say that he met Elizabeth, who claimed she was a widow, when he was thrown from a horse when riding near her family property and her brother offered assistance to him. However, the Heslop family lived on the same street where Abbott's father Thomas had his nursery business and where Abbott worked (Papanui Rd, Christchurch) – so perhaps the young Albert Abbott picked up one of his clientele!

On the 25th September, 1876 Elizabeth remarried the much younger Albert Abbott 'a gentleman' at Timaru– she was 36 and he was aged just 22 years of age. Elizabeth states that she is a Spinster on the marriage certificate, as she had not obtained a divorce from Charles. She was three months' pregnant (likely with Albert's child) when she remarried. His parents apparently tried to stop the marriage, according to Albert's later account, which may be why they travelled to Timaru (south of Christchurch) to be married. Their first baby Albert Lancelot Abbott was born 23rd March, 1877. Hector Alfred Heslop Abbott followed in 1878 (he died aged 16 years in 1894), and Clayton Mowbray Abbott in 1880 (born at Woolston, NZ), whilst daughter Mabel was born in 1887 – when Elizabeth was 47 years old.

Elizabeth's new younger husband Albert had been a 'Nurseryman' at his father's *Exeter Nursery* business in Christchurch, and he called himself a 'Botanist'. Abbott became a public figure early in life: as a teenager in 1869 he received a special commendation for a bouquet of 24 cut roses at the Christchurch Horticultural Show. In 1873 he was elected a member of the St Alban's Young Men's Christian Association and in the same year he gave a 'good' public recital called 'The Parting Hour.' *Exeter Nursery* on Papanui Road was known for its 'choicest roses' and was a highly successful business. Thomas Abbott advertised in 1874 that he was 'By appointment to Sir James Ferguson, Governor of New Zealand,' with the endorsement of the Royal Emblem for New Zealand. In 1886 Thomas produced a book 'A general catalogue of plants.' However, in November 1880, Mr Gimblett announced that A.J.

Abbott of *Exeter Nurseries* 'with a well-known ability and acquaintance with the requirements of the public' would be managing his nurseries. It is interesting that Albert decided to move away from working for his father's successful business.

In 1881 Albert was elected to the committee of the Papanui Educational District Board, resigning to move to the Heathcote district (Woolston) to take up his new job, where he became a member of the local council and United Ancient Order of Druids (a Freemason's branch). There he worked in Gimblett's nursery on Ferry Road, which was 20 acres, and perhaps managed the land in the Heathcote Valley also owned by Gimblett, which was another 20 acres.

The year 1882 was a highly eventful one, with a great personal tragedy. Work was going well: Albert sent ferns to the Great Exhibition of 1882 in Christchurch (the International Exhibition at Hagley Park) and the same year received a special prize for a bouquet exhibited at the Christchurch Horticultural Society. However, Albert was also witness at a coronial inquest related to the drowning of his 8-year-old niece Ruth Harrison in the Heathcote River. The inquest was held at the Wharf Hotel, Woolston. The witnesses told how the elder Harrison sister was allowed to go with her three younger siblings for a walk along the river (her mother and children were visiting from Auckland); it was said a man gave her sister Ruth a fish and she was dangling it in the river on the end of a string when she fell in. It was noted by a jurymen that the 'wires were broken down at the spot, where a great many children congregate.' No-one saw the child fall into the water, and when she was already in the water her older sister called out, and Albert ran and jumped in to save her, to no avail. The child was dead and could not be saved.

The following year, in 1883, Albert and Elizabeth moved from the district of Lower Heathcote and away from the scene of the awful tragedy. In February 1884 Albert was living back at his parents or in-laws home at Papanui Rd, Christchurch, and advertised that he was looking for a job as a nurseryman, florist or head gardener.

In 1887 Albert was exhibiting and judging at the Christchurch Horticultural Society's flower show and read a paper appropriately titled, 'Narcissi.' He spoke regularly at the society, and in March 1888 gave a talk on 'Exhibition flowers'. His full talk is printed in the *Lyttelton Times* 16th April 1888 and covered the topics of roses, chrysanthemums, carnations and picotees, dahlias, gladioli, pansies, penstemons, verbenas, auriculas, phloxes, asters and zinnias. He starts his talks with a false humbleness:

I feel I cannot address you with that confidence which is the outcome of greater ability, though I have been very successful in the cultivation and exhibition of almost every class of flower.

In July 1888, Abbott gave another talk on 'Exhibition Blooms' to the Christchurch Horticultural Society. With his father and brother, he was also a judge of exhibitions. In September 1888, there is first mention of 'Professor Abbott' giving a talk at the Belfast Library, Christchurch, with his 'Professor' title likely self-proclaimed.

Whilst his horticultural experience was blooming, Abbott's interests in spiritualism was also developing. He became the Secretary of the Christ Church Divine Healing Association in 1888, at an inaugural meeting of 100 people, after a talk on faith healing by forceful and persuasive Evangelist Reverend John Alexander Dowie. The evening talk beforehand at the

Theatre Royal was titled 'The Sanctification of Spirit, Soul and Body. Faith healers were against the rapidly developing fields of medicine and pharmacy. Reverend Dowie, dubbed a 'rascally false prophet,' had been based in Melbourne and was involved in an arson scandal that burnt down his Tabernacle church in Collingwood. He set up another healing centre in Fitzroy, and was fleeing to America after his talk in New Zealand, where he eventually established the city of Zion.

On the 1st September 1888, there was a large earthquake in North Canterbury, with many buildings being damaged in Christchurch including the Durham Street Methodist Church where the Heslops worshipped. This was the same year that Elizabeth and Albert went to live in Melbourne, and may have been one of the reasons why they left: other reasons may have been that she was a bigamist, and both her parents who had been living with her family (at Manchester Rd and Springfield Rd, Christchurch) had now died, her father (in his 79th year) on 24th March 1887 and her mother (in her 83rd year) on the 29th September 1888. A position was also now available as head of the Free Christian Church in Melbourne, which Albert Abbott eagerly took up.

On the 11th December, 1888, Mesdames Abbott and three children (possibly Elizabeth Abbott with Albert jnr, Hector, Clayton and Mabel) sailed from Lyttelton to Melbourne. Albert Abbott may have arrived earlier.

Aside from being a Botanist, Albert would also be a Phrenologist, Palmist and senior member and Pastor of the Free Christian Church, a cult-like church in Victoria (although Albert's parents were Baptists). The Abbott-Miller family (son George keeping the name Miller) were co-located in the headquarters of the Free Christian Church, the Bethshan Faith Healing Centre, 156 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy.

In 1892, Elizabeth would accuse Albert of acting in an inappropriate manner towards other women in the church. Elizabeth and Albert would cease to live with each other from September 1892, the date when Elizabeth refused to copy and send a letter written by Albert, supposedly to one of his lovers. In November 1892 an article in the *Herald* (Melbourne) was headlined:

A Bethshan Scandal

Pastor Abbott on his Defence

Charges of Immorality Refuted

A Queer Story, A Queer House, A Queer Family, A Queer Religion

The Herald, 28 November 1892

The *Herald* reporter states:

Mrs Abbott is a somewhat tall woman, whose face at present resembles a pathetically worried appearance, due to the domestic grievances of which she believes herself to be a hapless victim... She was dressed entirely in black. Her hair is tinged slightly with grey; her figure is angular; and she has every appearance of having a soul sick with grief, or else a poor deluded creature with the bells of her intellect "jangled out of tune and harab." ... Mr Abbott is a very ordinary looking man of about 35 or 38... He might be taken for a bank clerk or shopkeeper – anything but a faith healer.

The Herald, 28 November 1892

Elizabeth referred to another woman being on Mr Abbott's knee, being fondled and kissed by him, who was seen leaving his bedroom at midnight. These accusations were supported by a Mr Jonas, who was fighting against Elizabeth's poor treatment. Elizabeth says to the reporter:

We have been married 17 years, and before this woman came between us there has never been a happier couple.

The Herald, 28 November 1892

At a public meeting, Elizabeth states:

For many months he has come down to breakfast and has said 'Good morning' to everyone in the room but me; and he has kissed that woman who has taken my place always. Because I object to him doing that he has called me a jealous being, and said to me that I am a liar, a thief, a pick-pocket, an impure woman, and a hypocrite, and has said that I have a devil. Is it possible to have a worse character?... Only God knows what I have gone through these last 18 months.

Barrier Miner 28 November 1892

At the same meeting,

A long letter was next produced from a former inmate of the Bethshan, in which she stated that she had resolved to expose the sin and hypocrisy about the place, and wound up by declaring that it would be impossible to write in a letter of all the works of the devil that she saw at "Bethshan."

The Age, 28 November 1892

The woman accused of being Albert's love-interest admitted to going to Abbott's room on a Friday night to drop off his mended trousers.

Another public meeting was held in 1892 where Abbott speaks up in his own defence and answers the accusations of Jonas and his wife. He gives his life history, claiming he hails from the Abbott's of Canterbury, and detailing his education in faith healing, under the guidance of Dowie on his brief visit to Christchurch. At this meeting he claims that his wife suffered from a 'malady' and said that she had 'mania' from several years earlier. He also said that it was she, not him who was having an affair, saying that:

The statement that he had forsaken his wife for others was absolutely false, but it seemed she had forsaken him for another. (cries of 'shame' ...) Well, he would withdraw that expression. (Hear, Hear).

The Bendigo Independent, 2 December 1892

He suggested that a spiritualist had wrongly insinuated that he was keeping a 'bad' woman in Brunswick. Abbott claimed that the woman whom his wife was suspicious of was his wife's own daughter in law – Edith Miller (nee Thompson), the attractive young wife of Elizabeth's eldest son George - and that it was customary to kiss family members good morning and good night. Elizabeth was accused by Albert of being deluded, and he said to a reporter that her son and other members of the church had made a statement saying that his wife's claims were unsubstantiated. He also denied writing endearing letters, in particular one to a young lady by the name of Emily Nichols.

However, in response Mr Jonas said that

He had other evidence which he was not at liberty to bring forward except on certain conditions. (Oh, oh).

At this public meeting, church members voted on the position of Abbot, and following this the Chairman announced that a vote of confidence in Abbott was shown.

Such accusations of Abbott's philandering ways were later proved to be true and Elizabeth was vindicated. In 1893 another scandal eruptedⁱⁱ when a meeting was held in Collingwood to discuss the growing problem of Pastor Abbott. The Chairman of the meeting, who had supported Abbott's character a year prior, now said that he was '*staggered when he became convinced that the charges made were true.*' There had been a split in the Church, along the lines of those for and against Abbott. Abbott had been seen walking arm in arm with one of the 'sisters' of the church and seated with her on his knee, whilst other young women of the church were seen hanging around his door. Pastor Abbott was asked to withdraw from his senior position with the Free Christian Assembly, however this did not occur.

This must have been a very stressful period for Elizabeth, as in 1894, her and Albert's son Hector died aged 16 years, after a long illness. Hector may not have received traditional medical care, such as Abbott's belief in faith healing and his own healing abilities.

Around this time Abbot's eldest son, Albert Lancelot Abbott, changed his surname to that of his half-brother (Miller). He would later have his own brush with the law when he made false claims, setting up as a 'Dental Surgeon' when in fact he was a 'Dental Mechanic'.¹

Pastor Abbott married large numbers of people at the Free Christian Church, Queens Street, Melbourne, at the Cromwell Buildings, Burke St Melbourne, at 24 Brunswick St, Fitzroy (the Turner household) and at Holt's Matrimonial Agency at Melbourne for 10 pounds, 6 shilling and 8 pence per month, and the marriages subsequently led him to the court on many occasions. From May 1902 to May 1903 he reported celebrating 800 marriages. In 1900, Abbott married someone who was already married, a young woman by the name of Hutchinson, who was later found dead in the Yarra, a presumed suicide. In 1901 Abbott was witness in a court case related to a 'breach of promise' of marriage. At this time the Free Christian Assembly was meeting at Foresters Hall, Collingwood, where Pastor Abbott gave many speeches. In 1902 he was mentioned in another case where he married a couple where the bride was underage, and the couple were subsequently accused of killing an infant whose body was found in the Yarra. In other cases, he married 13 and 16-year-olds who gave false declarations about their age, and presided over the marriages of bigamists.

Drama and engagement in public events were never far from Abbott's life. In 1902 Pastor Abbott was still with the church and presented a petition from the Church to the Governor begging for clemency for Selina Sangal, accused of killing her husband. In 1903 there was a fire at his business in his rooms in the Cromwell Buildings, corner of Elizabeth and Bourke Streets, Melbourne. The business was uninsured, and 250 pounds worth of books were destroyed. It was at this time that he referred to himself as a Professor of Botany and

¹ ' The run-ins with the law continued when Albert Lancelot's son, Albert 'Hepburn' Miller, who was also a dentist, deserted his wife and was sued for divorce, a case that made the papers when Hepburn was accused of snooping on his ex-wife. When Albert Lancelot Miller died in 1953 a widow, he did not leave any money to his son Hepburn, but left all of his money to charity, including the Prince Henry's Hospital, Children's Hospital, The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind and The Lost Dogs' Home.

Phrenology – he claimed that he was not a university Professor but nevertheless a Professor of Anatomy, Theology and Psychology, and that he taught botany and psychology. It does not appear that he had any university education or basis for claims to be a Professor.

Another scandal involving Abbott occurred in 1906, when it was reported that a woman, Mrs Rebecca Haldane, attacked Pastor Abbott with an umbrella outside the Temperance Hall. At the scene, Rebecca had accused him of various things, and according to Abbott, called him ‘vulgar and wicked names.’ Pastor Abbott was the first to report this event, firing off a letter to the editor at *The Age*. Rebecca had struck Abbott as a result of a ‘horrid letter’ he had sent her. He had apparently hypnotized her and then forced her to write a letter in which she said that all previous charges she had made against him were false.

Rebecca had been part of the Free Christian Church in Collingwood in 1895 when Pastor Abbott was using faith healing for unsound purposes. Rebecca describes becoming infatuated with the Pastor when he was performing faith healing and phrenology and ‘*pat oil on [her] forehead...over the bump of individuality*’.

She said that he was a constant visitor at her home until May 1905. She had made charges against him and was initially willing to go to the church committee as a witness to report against him, but concerned it would ruin him, she agreed not to proceed with the charges – but in front of two witnesses, said she did not deny them either.

Albert claimed that Rebecca and his estranged wife Elizabeth were conspiring against him, and blamed Elizabeth for Rebecca assaulting him (although Rebecca claimed Elizabeth knew nothing of the matter). The previous year, Elizabeth expressed sorrow for Rebecca when the young woman went to visit her ‘incognito.’ Rebecca soon revealed her true identity to Elizabeth and Rebecca reported to the newspaper that the older woman convinced her to go back to her husband (Elizabeth warning against Abbott, his philandering having gone on for 14 years by then). At one stage Elizabeth made a statement to the press on these events, and Abbott retorted, claiming that she was a bigamist as her first husband was still alive. Abbott claimed that he had married Elizabeth in 1880 (it was in fact 1876) when she said that she was a widow, but that her husband, a seaman, ‘reappeared’ six years into their marriage before again leaving on a voyage. He claimed that he had only three children by Elizabeth (perhaps disowning his eldest son who had, by then, changed his name). He said that he was paying her an allowance to ‘keep things quiet for the sake of the children.’ He inferred that the separation was due to his discovery that she was a bigamist, and not his own scandals that were revealed in 1892-93 and beyond. Such ‘umbrella hitting’ cases involving affairs were normally dismissed as they were deemed ‘provoked’, but in this case, Rebecca Haldane was fined 5 shillings.

In 1909, there was a police crusade to crack down on the craft of clairvoyance, palm-reading and sham spiritualism in Melbourne. By then, Abbott had a clairvoyant business partner and apparent lover, Mrs Sarah Ann ‘Annie’ Turner, who had been accused of using her ‘subtle craft’ to impose upon a young police constable called Clement Bell early in the year. The penalty under the Police Offences Act was as follows:

Any person pretending, or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means or device, by palmistry or otherwise, to defraud or impose upon any other person, shall be liable on conviction to pay a penalty not exceeding £25 and in default of payment to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding six months.

Clement Bell had asked Mrs Turner (under the instruction of constable Gleeson) where his wife was, and she said that she had seen her 'in service' in Prahran. In fact, Clement Bell was unmarried and establishing a 'trap' for Mrs Turner. A sum of 10 pounds, with 5 pound costs, was inflicted, with an appeal to be lodged, and three other charges to be faced in the future. The appeal was lost and Mrs Turner charged.

The same year, Abbott had travelled with Mrs Sarah Ann (Annie) Turner to Ballarat and then Sydney (where she lived in a house with Abbott), to hold fortune telling forums, and she was charged with fortune telling and he of assisting her in the Central Summons Court, Sydney (the case was dismissed). The police had prosecuted a number of clairvoyants in Melbourne around this time.

A meeting was held in 1909 at the Temperance Hall with a motion put forward to denounce 'humbug' and 'low grade' spiritualism motivated by unscrupulous minds and mercenary purposes, and to support the actions of the police, whilst calling for a repeal of the Police Offences Act to bring it in align with modern thought. Unsurprisingly, Pastor Abbott fiercely opposed the motion.

Later in 1909, Abbott was involved as a witness to divorce proceedings, when Mrs Turner sued for divorce on ground of desertion, and Mr George Turner accused his wife of having an affair with Abbott, catching her in the kitchen with Abbott in 1906 and then deciding to depart the household. Mrs Turner was described as 'a clairvoyant charlatan' and herbalist, but she claimed that Abbott was her agent, and that they had a 'business relationship' only, as Abbott was carrying on a matrimonial business in the Turner household. The divorce between George and Annie Turner was decreed by Justice Hodges.

In 1911, a business alliance was formed between Annie Turner (now Foster-Turner), 'Pastor' Abbott and a spiritualist called Charles Bailey. The charlatan trio travelled to Europe together to 'perform,' with antics included Bailey 'egg laying.' At one stage they presented to an audience of 50-60 'well to do' women at Caxton Hall, London to refute the accusations of William Marriot, a journalist who had declared them fraudsters. Around 1914, Annie and Albert fell out with Charles Bailey, who got in trouble for having two 'concubines' aside from his wife.

In 1916, *The Truth* wrote about the ghost of Stead (who went down on the Titanic) being channeled through Mrs Annie Foster-Turner, who spoke about a 'Julia Bureau' being established by Turner and Abbott in Melbourne. By this time, it was said that Mrs Foster-Turner had remarried a German, who had taken on her surname (and was fined for it), however there is no evidence of this. She lived in an ornate mansion, Foster Court, on the corner of St Kilda and Commercial Roads, Melbourne, which had a fancy roof with an electric globe upon it. Earlier in the year Foster-Turner and Abbott presented at St James Hall, Phillip Street, Sydney, and a very entertaining report of this event was provided by the *Truth* newspaper.

Her fat paws sparkled with diamond rings. On her head she had piled enough brown hair to stuff a bolster, several combs studded with brilliants, and a bunch of roses and foliage adorned the structure. Raising spooks and claiming to cure sick people must be a paying game, for Mrs Turner is a splendid specimen of Mrs Newly Rich.

Mrs Foster-Turner and Abbott established the 'Foster Turner Institute' at 110 Bathurst Street, Sydney, but Annie Foster-Turner died aged 60 in 1921 at Foster Court, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne. After her death, an obituary was written which recognised her 'remarkable gift.' It was also reported that she had to pay 150 pounds for giving police information which at the time was considered false, but which later proved to be true. When Sir Arthur Conan Doyle toured Australia, he commented on Foster-Turner's gifts and assistance in helping to find a missing person (who was deceased), which caused much controversy in the press. Annie Foster-Turner left a considerable amount of wealth and gave the farm at Trafalgar to her ex-husband George and other property to family and friends. Did Abbott inherit the property at Bathurst Street?

In 1923, Abbott declared himself a 'Medical Botanist at the 'Foster-Turner Institute' and in 1926, declares that he had all of Mrs Foster-Turner's remedies stocked. He also stated that he had been a 'botanic herbalist' for 45 years. But in 1928, Abbott advertised as being a psychological expert, herbalist able to diagnose any sickness, and offered vocational guidance by phrenological assessment, with the statement 'Serious Battle of Life.'

In the 1930s he was fiercely attacked the theory of evolution. In 1934, he attacked radical theologian Dr Samuel Angus at a public forum in Sydney at the British-Israel World Federation (of which Abbott was President), where Angus critiques contemporary interpretations of the atonement. In the debate, Abbott declared himself a 'gold medallist in theology...[and said that] he had the record in Australia in marriages – he had celebrated 14,000; and that he refused to take money for preaching the gospel.' He said that Angus was 'flying to idolatry, and [was] going astray.' In 1932 he gave a speech as part of the New Guard Civil Unit (a growing fascist movement) on 'God, King and Country' and in 1935 he was involved in Empire Day with the Governor, giving a talk on 'The Ancestry of the British Throne.'

In 1935, in an article titled 'Abbot Again,' he denies accusations that he was ever involved in spiritualism and says that:

In conclusion, I desire to state that I have abundant credentials, certificates, diplomas, registrations, letters from Royalty, Governors, British and Dominion Prime Ministers, etc., and from the Victorian Registrar-General every year up to this month, officially recognising me as 'head of the Free Christian Church. I positively was never a spiritualist.'

Abbott continued his business in vocational guidance via phrenology and botany until May 1941 at Bathurst St in Sydney – the same month he died in Melbourne. He claims the initials 'M.R.Ph.S. (Lond)', whatever they may be, and that he was 'surpassing psychology.' He also offered 'free' bible classes at his house, stating 'thanks for donations' in the advertisement. From June 1941 it is reported that Professor Abbott's Medical Institute 'late of Bathurst St,' had moved to Hardy's Chambers at Hunter St, Sydney and that 'all tested remedies for curable diseases' were available. Hardy's Chambers was also selling Abbott's book 'The Chosen People Triumphant.'

In January 1941, Professor Abbott, World Lecturer, delivers a public lecture at the Royal Zoological Gardens, declaring an assurance of 'British World Victory.' In March he delivers a lecture 'Divine Building: Bethel to New Jerusalem' in Martin Place, Sydney.

When Abbott died in Melbourne in May 1941, there was only one funeral notice, placed by two students:

In loving memory to our late beloved Pastor and teacher, Professor A.J. Abbott...A faithful and true leader.

Elizabeth ended up leaving her second husband in 1892, working to the end to support herself as a 'Warehouse Manager', whilst Albert headed for Sydney. Elizabeth died in 1920 at 174 Barkly Street, Brunswick (daughter's Mabel's house). She seemed to have lied about her age during her lifetime, as her death certificate indicates that she was born in 1848 (she was actually born in 1840). She was very close to her children when she died, and her death notice placed by them read:

*We may be loved by others
But love like mother's never comes again.*



Pastor Abbott, drawing from The Herald, 1892



Charlatan Albert James Abbott, 2nd husband of Elizabeth Heslop. He was a 'gentleman', nurseryman and head of the Free Christian Church in Melbourne, and also falsely claimed that he was a Professor of Phrenology and Botany.



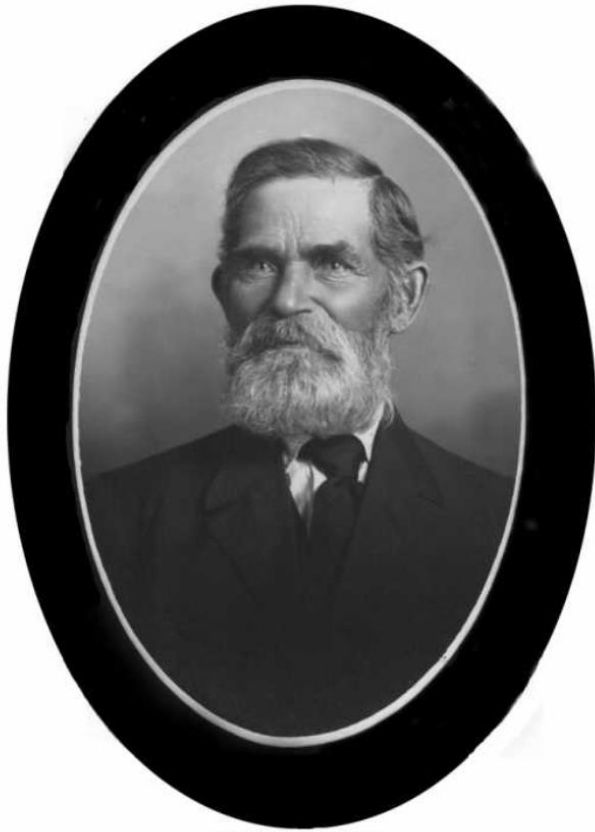
The Miller-Abbott family on the banks of the Yarra River, Melbourne
 Elizabeth Abbott nee Heslop is seated right of centre with hat and neck tie.

Back Row – from Left - 1 Leonard Miller age 21, 2 Percy Miller age 19, 3 Edith Miller (see Thompson) and 4 George Miller

Middle Row – from right – 5 standing Clayton Abbott 6 sitting next to him Tom Stevens 7 Elizabeth Abbott (nee Heslop, formerly Miller) this is the only photo that the family have of her. 8 Ethel, (Clayton's wife) 9 Elsie Miller 18 years

Bottom Row – from Left – 10 Grace Miller (her twin Dorothy is the little girl nearly hidden) 11 Albie Stevens 12 Mabel Stevens (nee Abbott) with handkerchief on head.

All others in the photo are friends.



Doctor Mowbray Kitchner Heslop



MRS. REBECCA HALDANE

Top: Charles Mowbray Heslop, Elizabeth Abbott (nee Heslop's) brother, a Doctor and photographer in the US who would also leave two wives. Bottom: Mrs Rebecca Haldane, accused of 'assaulting' Pastor Abbott with an umbrella, a woman he had previously had an affair with and conned into withdrawing the allegations of misconduct.



Mrs ANNIE TURNER.

Mrs Annie Turner, also known as Mrs Foster-Turner, whom Abbott would also have a relationship and business partnership with

John Alexander Dowie



Alexander Dowie in his robes as Elijah the Restorer

Alexander Dowie, who first taught Abbott faith healing. He fled Adelaide, then Melbourne, then Australia and set up the City of Zion in America. Source: Wikipedia

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ⁱ It is difficult to trace the birth of Charles Miller in Scotland or England. There is a record of a Charles Calder Miller born in 1843 in Sunderland, Durham who received his mates certificate in Newcastle in 1863.

ⁱⁱ ‘Clerical Scandal at Collingwood,’ 28 December 1893