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ELIZA DAVIES

DEDICATED TO HER PUPILS: AN APPRAISAL OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF ELIZA DAVIES

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Eliza Arbuckle Davies (1819-1888)

DEDICATED TO HER PUPILS

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realised that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished (Acts 4: 13, 14)

Christian pioneer, Eliza Davies, twice visited Australian in the 19th century and established schools in New South Wales and South Australia. She had almost folk heroine status among the Churches of Christ, but efforts by this writer to have her autobiography, *The Story of an Earnest Life*,[1] republished in both Australia and the U.S.A. were singularly unsuccessful. The publishers saw it as sanctimonious and self-indulgent.

Noting that reluctance to republish the autobiography, the late A.W. Stephenson wrote a brief account of her story for the Churches of Christ Historical Digest.[2] Later, he wrote a small piece for a North Shore (Sydney) newspaper drawing attention to the lack of mention in an education supplement of Eliza's work in establishing a school in the Flat Rock (Willoughby) area. Stephenson's article inspired a local historian Barbara Ward to produce an edited version of Davies' memoir, which she entitled *A Lady in a Thousand*, in which she eliminated much of its religious sentiment. That title derives from a comment made by the NSW State Governor, Sir John Young, in recognition of her work in establishing the Flat Rock School. However, by eliminating the religious content, Ward denuded Davies' story of its evangelical underpinnings. For Davies, the gospel was both a purpose of her educational endeavours (an opportunity to propagate it) and an outcome of it (since her efforts were typically directed towards the under privileged). These themes are explored in this monograph. The title derives from the dedication of Davies' work to "The Pupils of the Kentucky Female Orphan School." That dedication itself suggests a ministry to the underprivileged. An overview of Davies' story follows.

Early Life

Elizabeth (Eliza) Davies (nee Arbuckle) was born in 1819 in Paisley, Scotland, a town which had an historic past and where she found congenial company among a god-fearing community. Eliza's family, however, were not themselves regular church goers. Eliza barely remembered her father, Matthew, who

died when she was two years old, and her relationship with her mother was sometimes strained. Much of Eliza's subsequent romantic fantasies might be traced to a lack of parental love. Her mother twice remarried—to men of whom Eliza did not approve because of their crude ways.

Eliza Davies, c1850s

Eliza's experience as a teacher began in a Sunday school (probably Presbyterian) at Paisley where for some inexplicable reason she was placed in charge of a class of older girls:[3]

> "Instead of placing me in a class with ignorant girls like myself to be instructed they gave me a class of girls, bigger and older than myself to instruct".

In this role she learned some important educational lessons and while professing her lack of fitness for this role someone must have recognised her potential.

Her real Christian education began when her family moved to Glasgow around 1831. Here she met up with a young evangelical lady (Miss H)[4] who was possibly a Wesleyan. She described Miss H as the "first acquaintance she ever had who was profoundly religious." Though she considered this lady rather strait-laced (Eliza loved music and dancing—not approved of by holiness sects) she admired her for her inner beauty. From her, she learned something of the grace of God. She bought and began to read a Bible. She accompanied Miss H in a ministry to the poor in the slums of Glasgow—delivering both bread and the Bread of Life. Through these experiences she learned that "good works" were not enough and recognised her own need of salvation.

Eliza found her way into a congregation of Scotch Baptists, which she described as "different from anything I had seen. They partook of the Lord's Supper, had fellowship, exhortation and prayers and sang hymns". The sect had great appeal. Though she had difficulties with some aspects of this group's membership requirements[5] she sought to be baptised (immersed). Unfortunately, her affiliation with the Scotch Baptists brought her into conflict with her domineering mother who despised the sect. It seems also that her mother wanted her to marry to bolster family finances. Eliza thus became torn between what she saw as her Christian obligation to obey her mother and her commitment to Christ and the church.

First visit to Sydney

At this time, Eliza was invited by friends at the Baptist church, a Mr. and Mrs Holmes,[6] to accompany them to far off NSW. Her attempts at reconciliation with her mother failed and she decided to join the Holmes. Not knowing whether she would ever see her mother again, Eliza packed her belongings and sailed as an assisted immigrant into the antipodes on board the *Portland*. Also on board was a cousin, Tom Arbuckle. Due to estrangement within the family, she had never met him, but he provided good company for her on the long voyage.

Following numerous adventures, including a near shipwreck, the *Portland* docked at Port Jackson in December 1838. She was provided hospitality by the kindly Comptroller of Customs and his gracious wife, Mrs. C in their comfortable house, Waterview Villa, overlooking Waterview Bay.[7] It seemed to be a pattern in her life that the lowly Eliza found patronage among the rich or famous.


UNMARRIED FEMALE IMMIGRANT.

Elizabeth Arbuckle – an unmarried female immigrant. Described as native of Paisley. References from Baptist deacons in Glasgow. She received a bounty of £15.0.0.

After the companionship she experienced on the ship, the young Eliza (now 19 years of age) found Sydney town a rather scary place—hot, waterless, and inhabited by drunks and convicts. Her arrival coincided with the hanging in Sydney of several of the Myall Creek murderers.[8]

In the midst of all this, Eliza was stricken by fever and finished up in Sydney Hospital in appalling conditions. Surrounded by profane women and thieving nurses she cried for her mother. Visits by Mrs. C and her cousin Tom provided some comfort.

As soon as she could, and though far from well, she discharged herself from hospital and found her way back to Waterview Villa.

It happened that while there, the C's received a visit from the explorer Captain Charles Sturt and his French wife Charlotte.[9] The result was an invitation to Eliza to go with the Sturts to South Australia[10] where Sturt had been appointed Surveyor General. Glad of the opportunity of leaving NSW and moving to the new convict free colony, Eliza accepted. After sad farewells to her hosts and her guardians, the Holmes, she prepared for departure but first visited the Baptist church where the minister gave her a letter of introduction to David McLaren, Manager of the South Australian Company which had taken up large tracts of land in the new colony. McLaren, as it turned out, was an ardent

Scotch Baptist and an acquaintance of developer and philanthropist George Fife Angas. The Sturts, McLaren[11]and Angas figure prominently in Eliza's future.

Visit to South Australia

Eliza left with the Sturts on board the South Australian Company schooner *John Pirie*. She seems to have been included in the passenger list as a servant of Mrs. Sturt. The *John Pirie* was a small, sturdy vessel but unsuited for passengers on long journeys. The ship ran into a storm in Bass Strait and was imperiled. When its drunken Captain Martin seemed be losing control, command of the ship was taken over by Captain Hay, a passenger.[12] The *John Pirie* put into a bay off Preservation Island (part of the Furneaux group in east Bass Strait) for repairs. On the island Eliza met up with James Munro, a former convict and sealer who lived on the island with an aboriginal wife.[13] Eventually the *John Pirie* reached Port Adelaide (29 March 1839). The settlement of South Australia was just three years old with a population of around 12000. Eliza was impressed with the colony's potential.

After a pleasant sojourn in the Sturt home, preparation was put in hand for the Surveyor-General's exploratory trip to Lake Alexandrina. Sturt had been commissioned to undertake this trip by Governor Gawler. It was effectively a follow up of his exploration of the Murray River in 1830 and his observations while in charge of a droving party from the east in 1838. Despite the possible dangers, Gawler and Sturt thought it politically advantageous for ladies to participate in the expedition because this would help convince potential settlers that the area was safe. Mrs. Gawler declined to participate sending her daughter Julia instead.[14] The Gawlers were pious evangelical Christians and Eliza was delighted to join them. This suited Gawler and Sturt, possibly because she could be a companion (governess?) for Julia and a servant for Mrs. Sturt.

At Lake Alexandrina – Eliza Davies is believed to be the lady with the parasol. Members of a Ngarrindjeri family around campfire in the foreground. (Courtesy Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority).

The group left Adelaide on 22 November 1839, expecting to be back well before Christmas. Eliza describes the explorers' journey including flora, fauna and Aboriginal behaviour, in detail.

The journey to North-West Bend from Lake Alexandrina was not without its privations which included skirmishes with Aborigines and the loss of Henry Bryan, an aide to Gawler, who went ahead at one stage looking for water. Charlotte Sturt, Julia Gawler and Eliza thus became the first women to enter the Murray River system.

The final indignity occurred as they returned to Adelaide—a wheel on the cart carrying Eliza and the wounded Isaac Smith[15] collapsed, and she was forced to walk the last mile or so to Government House. She arrived bedraggled, thirsty and blistered on 29 December 1839. Though invited to spend the night at Government House, Eliza chose to walk on to the Sturt home. On the way she stopped at the premises of William Davies, a tinsmith, for more water. Davies accompanied her to the Sturt home and proposed to her on the way.

Disastrous marriage

During her time in South Australia Eliza received several offers of marriage. She resisted the flirtatious efforts of Tommy the aborigine, a marriage proposal by Captain Hay and the lewd advances of Evelyn Sturt the brother of Captain Sturt. With the contrivance of Charlotte Sturt, Eliza reluctantly agreed to marry Davies and did so on 17 April 1840.

Registry record – Marriage of William Davies and Eliza Arbuckle 17 April 1840

Although much has been made of Eliza's romantic imaginings it is possible that Charlotte Sturt, acting in loco parentis, considered her servant vulnerable in the predominantly male colony.[16] The ceremony was performed by the Colonial Chaplain, Rev. Mr. Howard. It was a disastrous marriage. Davies was abusive, alcoholic and violent—behaviours described in detail by Eliza (Chapter 6).

Matters came to a head in 1842 when William Davies left to follow up a business proposition in New Zealand. During his absence, Eliza's mother arrived from Scotland. Eliza looked to her for support, but the old tensions emerged when her mother urged her to stay in the marriage. However, Eliza decided she could no longer live with William Davies and took her marriage problems to the elders of the church. On his return to Adelaide, Davies was summoned to the church and read the "riot act." Eliza handed him the keys to the house and with her mother departed for Sydney (September 1842) where her sister resided.

Return to Sydney

Eliza found Sydney a much improved, almost attractive, city. Determined not to be a burden on her mother and sister she found employment as a governess in the service of the wealthy merchant Frederic Parbury, the owner of the palatial Granthamville Castle, Potts Point. Her mother once again contrived a marriage for Eliza, and she herself remarried. Eliza was less than happy about this, so when Frederic Parbury invited her to accompany him and his wife on a trip to Europe, she jumped at the opportunity. Once again saying a sad farewell to her mother and her former guardians (the Holmes), she left on the

East Indiaman *Sir George Seymour* in March 1847 for England. After a tempestuous journey via Cape Horn the ship made good time to Dartmouth, England, arriving in mid-June.

Meeting with Alexander Campbell in Scotland

Following some sight-seeing in London and other places, Eliza found her way to her hometown of Paisley, Scotland. There she was reunited with her cousins, one of whom was married to a Baptist minister, a Mr. Neil. While attending the Baptist church she learned that a contentious Scots/Irish American preacher, Alexander Campbell, had been invited to preach there. Eliza decided to attend. She described Campbell's arrival at the chapel on 28 August 1847 as follows:

> "He was above middle height, strongly built but rather thin; his hair was gray and stood up from his high intellectual forehead; he had heavy eyebrows; his perceptive organs were very large; he had a high Roman nose as one born to command; the lines on his face were strongly marked. With hat in hand, and bowed head, leaning lightly on a cane, he walked to the pulpit steps".

Alexander Campbell, c.1842

The New Testament lesson was 1 Corinthians 13. In a voice that was "firm and clear" Campbell told the congregation that he was not in the habit of taking a verse out of a chapter,[17] or a clause out of a text to preach on.

"We take the Bible, and nothing but the Bible as a text to preach from" he said. But for that occasion, said Campbell he wished to focus on verse thirteen: "now abideth faith, hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity".[18]

When Campbell finished his discourse, he commented that any "who wished to join the Church of Christ, the New Testament only required that a penitent believer should confess Christ, be buried with him in baptism and rise with him to newness of life". Eliza was captivated and barely noticed that Campbell had preached for three hours. It was a turning point in her life. She found his message transforming and remembered how she had years before agonised over the Calvinist requirement that she should exhibit proof of her "election" before she could join the Baptist church. She set aside the program she had mapped out for herself on leaving NSW and determined to go to America.

Over coffee, crackers and cheese in the "love room," Eliza was introduced to the congregation as being from Australia.[19] Intrigued by this, Campbell[20] spoke to her; he was interested both in her and in

Australia. Eliza told him about her desire to go to America. Campbell warmly invited her to join him at Bethany, Virginia,[21] where he was president/founder of Bethany College.

The trial of Alexander Campbell

The arrangement was for Eliza to go to America after she had finished visits to friends and relatives in Scotland and Campbell had completed a visit to Ireland. When she returned to Paisley, however, Eliza learned that Campbell had been imprisoned in Glasgow following a libel charge against him. This libel arose from Campbell's attempt to defend himself against malicious attacks by representatives of the Anti-Slavery Society. It seems that a group of Presbyterians, disturbed by Campbell's successes in Scotland, had sought to damage his reputation by accusing him of "man-stealing" (i.e., condoning slavery). Campbell explained to his Presbyterian accusers that he had no slaves himself nor would he keep them consistently. He believed in educating slaves for freedom and emancipating them. He pointed out, however, that the Bible accepted slavery and that holding slaves was upheld by the laws of Virginia.

Arising from a letter Campbell wrote on the matter, he was sued for libel by a hot-headed Presbyterian minister. Eliza hurried to visit Campbell in prison. Richardson in *Memoires of Alexander Campbell* describes Eliza's response:

> A Sister Davis [sic] who heard him preach at Paisley and had then resolved to emigrate to America and cast in her lot with the Disciples upon hearing of his imprisonment she came at once to Glasgow and was assiduous in her attentions.[22]

Campbell supporters appealed against the case; it was dismissed as an "abuse of process" and Campbell was released from prison. Ultimately his accuser was obliged to pay costs and Campbell was awarded substantial damages (£2000). However, his accuser absconded. Not wanting revenge Campbell did not pursue the award of damages. During all this, word reached him that his ten- year-old son Wickliffe, the darling of his wife Selina, had been drowned in Buffalo Creek near Bethany. It was a difficult time for the reformer.

Journey to America

Campbell returned to America after visiting Ireland. True to his word, he decided for Eliza to follow him, sending word for Eliza to join his aunt Ellen, her grandson John and two young brothers called Tener[23] who had enrolled at Bethany as students. Campbell considered this would be good company for Eliza and ensure she found her way to the remote village of Bethany. Travelling to that part of Virginia (the northern Panhandle) in 1847 was no easy matter. There were no railroads west of the Allegheny Mountains and travel beyond that was dependent upon stagecoaches and riverboats.

Several relatives and friends tried to dissuade her from going. Among these were her brother Tom who had just returned from India, and whom she had not seen for many years. She had hoped to spend time with Tom and his family, but word came from Campbell that the *Siddons* was due to sail from Liverpool on 1 October and she was expected be there shortly. There was little time for farewells. Tearfully, but resolutely, she said goodbye to her brother. She was never to see him again. Tom, his wife and their darling son died shortly afterwards from disease and accident.

The crowded ship with 350 passengers accommodated in filthy conditions in steerage departed on 12 October 1847. The usual tempestuous sea voyage followed, but on 30 October the battered ship dropped anchor between Staten and Long Islands, New York State. Eliza was less than flattering about the voyage:

> "A rougher more disagreeable, stormier voyage could not be imagined. The captain never seemed to have undressed all through the voyage. He had a badly disciplined ship, inferior officers, mutinous sailors, drunk and disorderly, leaky and unseaworthy vessel."[24]

The Hibernia – used over the years as guest house, private residence and President's home.

The travelers were cleared by Health and Customs Officers and finally released into the city. After dining together, they separated. Ellen Campbell, her grandson and Eliza prepared to travel on to Bethany College. The Teners tarried in New York. After furthering frightening adventures, including an attempt to steal their luggage, "three way-worn and weary travelers, alighted [from a coach] at the Hibernia House, Bethany"[25] in mid-November 1847.

Life at Bethany, Virginia

The elderly Ellen Campbell[26] experienced great joy at being united with members of her family. But Eliza, having travelled almost continuously for nine months, was tired and lonely. She felt happier the next day when she saw "the venerable face of Alexander Campbell." But underlying the joy in the Campbell household there was deep sadness. Selina, Campbell's wife, had never recovered from the death of Wickliffe and suffered deep depression. Selina took to visiting Wickliffe's grave and jumping fully clothed into the creek where he drowned. The care for his wife added to Campbell's burdens.

But more sorrow awaited Selina. Her elderly mother Ann Marie Bakewell declined in health and needed constant attention. Eliza described her as an "English lady of the old school, deeply prejudiced against everything American" but got on well with her. Eliza took it upon her herself to nurse Mrs. Bakewell staying with her night and day until she died (22 May 1848). On that same day Selina's daughter Margaret Ewing gave birth to a sickly son, Alexander.

Shortly afterwards, however, Margaret Ewing succumbed to consumption, a disease which had claimed Campbell's children by his first marriage. On her last Lord's Day, Margaret Ewing expressed a wish to partake of the Lord's Supper. Her father, mother, husband (J.O. Ewing) and Eliza shared in that last communion. Eliza sat by her side, holding the baby Alexander so his mother could see him. Her last thoughts were for her child. She wanted Eliza to care for him. Eliza was reluctant to commit to an open-ended situation but on the death of Margaret, she accepted that responsibility. She devoted her "whole mind and body to her little charge"[27] but despite her best efforts, her "wee pet lamb" soon died and was laid to rest beside his young mother.

Campbell Mansion, (from a painting by Lorraine Jacobs, 1996. Ms. Jacobs of New Zealand was Associate Secretary of the World Convention of Churches of Christ from 1992 - 2004).

Inexplicably, these deaths brought Selina back from her "slough of despond" and she resumed her role as the principal support for her husband. She assisted in the functioning of the College, attended to the management of the estate during Campbell's long absences and acted as the hostess for functions at Campbell Mansion. She outlived her husband by thirty years.

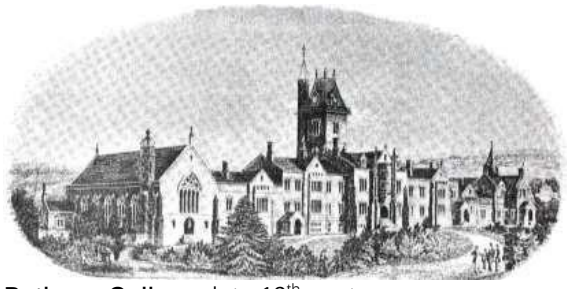
Eliza also ministered to Thomas Campbell, the father of Alexander Campbell, whose ideas on the nature of the church—born out of an understanding of the scriptures and his own his experiences in ministry—prefigured his son's.[28] Eliza's pen portrait of the elderly Campbell is worth quoting in full:

Thomas Campbell
(1763 - 1854)

"The patriarch Thos. Campbell sat in his rocking chair, with his silvery hair combed back from his massive forehead and falling on his shoulders. At times he sat perfectly still, his hands clasped before him, and his lips moving as in prayer. He was nearly blind, very deaf, and lost his memory in great measure except for divine things. It was one of my privileges to read the scripture to him daily for some time, and to hear him repeat hymns in great numbers by only reading the first line to him. I was able to do many little services for him for which I had many a "Bless you, my daughter."[29]

With increasing responsibilities at Bethany College and an expanding reformist agenda, these family tragedies must surely have taken their toll on Alexander Campbell. But he seemed relatively unfazed. Eliza wrote:

> "I never knew any man who had so many private sorrows, to do so many public works as Mr. Campbell. He was never in a hurry, never idle, had always time to entertain strangers. He was a great economist of time. He rose at four a.m.; was in his study until seven; then had prayers; then had breakfast, and away to the college on his grey horse to give morning lectures to his students; then attend to his printers and printing and farm till dinner-bell. After dinner, he would receive his heavy mail, open his letters, and write till tea-time, either in his study or the old parlour. The highest privilege anyone could enjoy, I thought was to hear him at family worship."[30]



Bethany College, late 19th century.

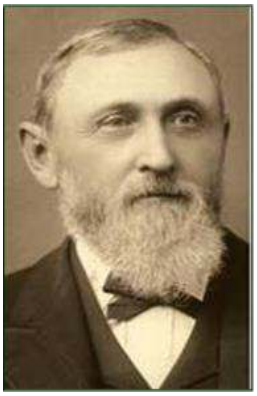
Notwithstanding her initial feelings of loneliness, Eliza made many friends at Bethany. She became particularly close to Clarinda Campbell (Alexander Campbell's youngest daughter by his first marriage). "Peerless Clarinda," she wrote, "the graces of her mind surpass the graces of her person and she was wondrously beautiful."[31]

Clarinda married William K. Pendleton, who became the second president of the College. She shared the vision of her father and Pendleton for Bethany College.

Growing circle of friends

Eliza developed a wide circle of friends from among the students at Bethany College and the nearby Pleasant Hill Female Seminary run by Alexander Campbell's sister, Jane Campbell McKeever. Among the students she met from Bethany College was J.W. McGarvey who accompanied her to several

functions. In later life McGarvey became a professor at, and from 1895, President of, the College of the Bible at Lexington, Kentucky. In those capacities, he influenced the lives of scores of young Australian men who trained for ministry there.



J.W. McGarvey.

McGarvey joined Bethany College in April 1847 some six months before Eliza's arrival. He was baptised while at college and determined to become a minister: his classical education ill-prepared him for this role. Bethany College was, and is, essentially a liberal arts college, consistent with "Common Sense" philosophy. [32] Alexander Campbell believed that the best education for ministry was one which sharpened the mind and gave students the basic languages and skills to enable them to read and interpret the Bible for themselves.

McGarvey learned his evangelistic skills by serving an apprenticeship with a successful evangelist and took a more applied approach to the preparation of ministers. Eliza and he became lifelong friends and McGarvey wrote her obituary.

A challenge to deeper service

Early in 1850, something curious occurred. Mr. Campbell, having just returned from Kentucky came into Eliza's room and handed her a pretty bouquet, "artistically arranged and swathed in blue ribbon, and a card on which was written, "For the Dove, with the compliments of J.D. Pickett." The reference to "the Dove" is clear enough. This was the nickname given by Campbell and other members of his family to Eliza because of the unstinted assistance she had given to Campbell and the family. But the reference to Pickett is intriguing. Pickett was an early student at Bethany and a professor there in the 1850s. He later fell out with some at the College over his support of the South in the looming civil war. [33] Whatever the significance of the bouquet, it left a lasting impression on Eliza. Was this another romantic overture? Perhaps it was a Macedonian call for help from the South. Eliza took it that way.

Campbell gave a glowing report of what the brethren had been doing at Midway, Kentucky. He told of a girls' orphan school being established and orphan girls being cared for. Eliza felt that she had served her purpose at Bethany and saw work among the orphans as an opportunity for ministry. Sadly, she said goodbye to the Campbells. McGarvey took her to the riverboat [34] and she waved her goodbyes to him, two Misses Campbell and Professor Loos (probably representing the College). Her journey to Midway took her through Georgetown, Kentucky, where she stayed with acquaintances from Bethany.

During her stay there, she met up with church luminaries John T. Johnson and Walter Scott.[35] These men facilitated her move to Midway.

The Female Orphan School of Midway

The Kentucky Female Orphans School was established in 1849 largely as the result of the work of James W. Parrish, John J. Johnson and the vision of Dr. Lewis Pinkerton. Eliza met both Pinkerton and Parrish and their wives at Midway. She describes Parrish as a farmer, a philanthropist and a man of "culture and influence." Pinkerton, a medical doctor, was baptised by Alexander Campbell in 1830. Abandoning his medical career, he became a preacher in Kentucky, serving for many years at Midway Christian church. Pinkerton had a passion for social justice and was especially interested in the welfare of children.

The prevailing educational philosophy was that education should be "diffused downwards," that is, "a focus on higher education would filter gradually down to the masses." There was a classist and sexist element to this. Apparently, there were subscription schools available to juveniles but, naturally, poorer people could not afford to pay much, if anything. It was not considered particularly important to educate young women; wealthier families could afford governesses for home tuition. At the bottom of the stack were female orphans. Eliza was undoubtedly caught up in these debates. She spent much of her life pursuing education for the poor.

Dr. Lewis Letig Pinkerton, (courtesy of Little Memorial Library, Midway University).

These issues weighed heavily on the mind of Pinkerton. In June 1846 Pinkerton wrote to Alexander Campbell as follows:

> "For the last four years I have been meditating the establishment of an extensive female orphan school and having completed the plan as far as I am able in advance, I have decided to obtain a charter next winter and press the matter on to success."[36]

The school was opened in October 1849.

Midway was chosen as the location as it was 'midway' between the large centre of Lexington and the state capital at Frankfort. It was also relatively close to Georgetown (where the influential Johnson lived). Parrish and local supporters were connected to the Midway church which provided financial support. Johnson, Parrish and Pinkerton were among the first trustees of the school.

Midway Church of Christ, c.1850. Pinkerton served there from 1844 – 1860.

Eliza became deeply interested in the work of the Orphan School and considered she could "fill a niche in the school" and offered her services. Her offer was gratefully accepted by the trustees who appointed her assistant matron. She later wondered whether she was up to the responsibilities of the demanding work, but on his return to Kentucky later that year, Campbell counselled her: "Attempt great things, expect great things, and great things will follow."

Joining the Orphan School in its infancy Eliza found that there was much to be done. The girls slept on straw mattresses on the floor, the rooms were uncarpeted and barely furnished, and there was a constant battle to find food and feed them. She appealed to her widening circle of friends for support in the form of money, clothing and dress material. From the money she brought mattresses and floor coverings. From the dress materials she cut out dresses and enlisted friends (probably from the Midway church) to convert them into garments. She interested the older girls in the school to undertake fancy work and assist with the sewing. There were no sewing machines of course. There is little doubt that Eliza played an important role in establishing the Orphan School. It is equally clear that the Orphan School became the real love of her life, and it is the Pupils of the Kentucky Female Orphan School to whom her autobiography is dedicated.

Pinkerton Hall, Teachers and Pupils, 1866. (From Giovannoli, H, *Kentucky Orphan School*, 1930 p 63).

Resulting from a visit of Walter Scott,[37] Eliza became interested in the work of the American Bible Union which aimed to send bibles to foreign lands. Learning that $30.00 made one a life member, she set aside $10.00 she had saved for a new bonnet and sought and secured similar contributions from two others so that a life membership could be procured for Dr. Pinkerton.

More came in from others, even the little girls in the Orphanage contributing their few cents. Eliza later acted as a colporteur for the American Bible Union in Australia.

Disturbing news and illness

Eliza found letters from her mother troubling—the old tension between her obligation to her mother and to her Christian work awakened. Perhaps, physically run down by all that she had undertaken, Eliza was "low in spirits" and thought of death. On meeting up again with Alexander Campbell in Lexington, she made him promise that if she died, she could be buried back in Bethany with others she had befriended and nursed. Campbell promised her he would ensure that this would happen if she died in America but reminded her that "she had much left to do in this world."[38] Eliza was indeed unwell and shortly succumbed to typhoid fever from which it took her several months to recover.

Friends at Midway arranged for her to have a holiday in the South (Louisiana). After a couple of months, she returned to Midway, surviving an outbreak of yellow fever and an outbreak of cholera on the paddle steamer on the way north. At Midway she learned that James Ware Parrish, one of the founders of the Orphan School, was seriously ill. She wanted to return there but a letter arrived from her sick sister in NSW begging her come home and assist with the children. Once again duty called. In June 1857 she closed the little private school she had been running for six children in the home of evangelist John Gano.[39] Eliza lived for a while as part of his family. John Gano's son Dr. Richard Gano[40] treated her for erysipelas, a disease which later reappeared in NSW.

Even though a further letter arrived from her sister to the effect she was much better, Eliza had committed herself to go. She re-opened that little school in the same room with the children of her former pupils twenty years later. On her resignation from the Orphan School, she received wonderful testimonials from the School's Trustees, Lewis Pinkerton (of the Midway Church), John D. Dawson (School principal), and John L. Gano. These recognised her contribution to the school as "teacher and assistant matron" over three years. Gano expressed appreciation for her contribution to his household as a "member of my immediate family" for twelve months.

To Australia and a new challenge

Returning to Georgetown, she renewed the acquaintance with friends there and met up with Judge Edmunds, Secretary of the American Bible Union with whom she had corresponded. Edmunds commissioned her to introduce the new version of the New Testament in Australia.[41] Travelling via Louisville, Kentucky, she eventually reached Wheeling, West Virginia, and made her way to Bethany. Her brief stay in the familiar surroundings of Bethany filled her with deep emotion, as did a visit to "God's Acre"[42] which brought back many sad memories.

Armed with a letter of recommendation from Alexander Campbell she travelled to New York and sailed for Australia on 29 October 1857 on board the *Sebastian Cabot*. One of the last things she did before

leaving New York was to buy herself a sewing machine— "a new thing in those days." It was a piece of equipment she had needed three years earlier at the Orphan School.

Eliza suffered the usual dramas of sickness and heavy seas—particularly in the roaring forties as the ship entered Bass Strait and approached Cape Otway. The ship docked in Hobson's Bay, Port Phillip, on 28 January 1858. After spending some time in the St. Kilda, Melbourne, home of the shipping agent, a Mr. Lord, she embarked on the *Portland* and arrived in Sydney in February 1858.

Unwelcome in Sydney

Expecting her sister to meet her at the wharf, she was disappointed and walked several miles to her sister's home in Woolloomooloo. She was coolly received by her sister, and her brother-in-law was rude and ungrateful. She got little access to the nephews and nieces whom she had come to support. And she learned that her mother was dead. Sitting near her mother's grave she became reconciled to her and forgot and forgave the bitterness which had occurred between them.

Seeking spiritual succour, she located a little church descended from the "disciples" church established in the back of Albert Griffin's grocery shop in Sydney in 1852. When Griffin left for the goldfields in 1856, most of the congregation transferred to Newtown and met in the home of Joseph Kingsbury in Francis Street. Eliza was not impressed. She wrote:

> "I found my way out there one Lord's Day, and at the house of Mr. K[ingsbury] I found ten or twelve persons who partook of the Lord's Supper. I introduced myself to them by showing Mr. Campbell's letter [of introduction]. All were curious to see his chirography. They had heard of him through Mr. Wallis and Mr. King, of England. They were delighted to ask and be answered about a man whom they had heard of, but of whom they knew nothing. They called themselves "Campbellites" and gloried in the name They called themselves "Primitive Christians "also, and they were primitive enough; they were forty years behind the times. They had Swedenborgians, and soul sleepers, and those who believed in the annihilation of the soul after death among them. They also had those who did not believe in paying a preacher, nor in building a house to worship in, nor in having family worship. After supper, they exhorted one another, and exhorted others to believe their theories. They made no converts from the world. They agreed to disagree on many points, but they were one in abusing the sects, and drawing down upon themselves the contumely of the whole community, not undeservedly .... I had hoped to make myself useful in the Sunday School but they had none.... I liked the members of this little church individually; they were mostly poor people, but of good moral character; but as a church I could not join them. No spiritual home for me."[43]

They were indeed a cranky community—more conscious of what they were against than what they stood for. The Newtown church, led by former Wesleyans, gained its knowledge of the Restoration

Movement largely through the intermittent arrivals of copies of the "British Millennial Harbinger" and one or two immigrants from England. They were working it out as they went along. Nothing had occurred in Australia comparable to the reformation associated with the American frontier. But with the assistance of British and American trained evangelists the church at Newtown transformed itself into Enmore Tabernacle, one of the largest Church of Christ congregations in Australia. It is one of the ironies of history that two of the church's most effective ministers, C.T. Forscutt and G.T. Walden, were probably taught by, and greatly influenced by, Eliza's friend, J.W. McGarvey, of the College of the Bible, Lexington.

Kiama—and a new challenge

But this lay in the future. For the moment, Eliza was disconsolate and sought to return to the United States. Out of money and unable to find work, Eliza sold her collection of books. Then Fate intervened. She met a man from Kiama (a Mr. Moses) who expressed an interest in the new version of the New Testament. He pressed her to come to the Illawarra. There she sold numerous copies of the new translation, but the sight of a poor Irish girl drew her back to her primary calling—the teaching and care of the poor. She would have been aware of agitation at the time in Kiama (1857) for the establishment of a National School and opposition to it by leading Anglicans associated with a church school. Eliza had very definite views on education (see Attachment).

The School at Mount Pleasant near Kiama

Pursuing her vision, she acquired a derelict hut on the picturesque Mt. Pleasant south of Kiama. In order to raise some money, she returned to Sydney. Waiting for her were letters from the USA including one from evangelist John Gano expressing sorrow at her departure from Midway. As sad as these letters made her, she was determined to press ahead with her school venture. She sold her fine sewing machine and some of the fancy clothes she purchased in New York and returned to Kiama where she repaired the little hut and refurbished it, papering over the cracks in the walls of the slab hut, dressing them with cotton fabric, converting a packing case into a table, making bookshelves and carpeting the floor. The skills she had learned at the Orphan School stood her in good stead.

She opened the school with twenty-five scholars on 9 August 1858.

> "They were," she said, "a very rough set of children, but I commenced my work by prayer, and exhortation to the children as to their conduct, and I got on very well with them." When all seemed to be going well a violent storm blew up, shaking the hut and dislodging wall slabs onto the desks. It was impossible to light a candle during the wind but embers of the fire were fanned into flames. Eliza managed to put the fire out. With the assistance of the older boys she managed to raise some of the slabs into position, but not secure them. The storm raged for three days. She dismissed the school and

> when the storm had abated, began repairing the building. But then she found that she had run out of food. Going to bed hungry she made this a matter of prayer.
>
> The next day, children returned with food: bread, milk, eggs, chicken, and pork. She finished with more than a week's provisions. She commented that "persons I had never seen, and who did not know my wants, sent me the kind of food I needed, when I needed it." Further bad weather and the arrival of a large snake persuaded her that the hut on "Hurricane Hill" (as she now called it) was not a safe place to live in. She found accommodation with acquaintances closer to the town, walking several miles each day to the hut to teach. Most of this accommodation was substandard but she observed that in the homes of the humble poor there was more kindness and hospitality than among the rich.

Letters and pamphlets from friends in the USA buoyed her and she passed on the publications to those who could read. It is clear from a long letter she wrote to Virginia Campbell, in which he described the flora, fauna and fossils of the region in detail,[44] that despite her privations, she was fascinated by the beauty of the area. Eventually she advised the school patrons that she could not continue there unless better accommodation arrangements could be made. One patron built an annex to his house and Eliza moved in there—her new "Dove's Nest." She committed herself to teaching for another year.

Pursuing the cause of the American Bible Union

She continued to pursue the interests of the American Bible Union. When boxes of books and publications arrived in Sydney for her, she closed the school for a week in order to collect them. Bypassing the usual protocols Eliza called directly on the Governor, Sir William Denison, to acquaint him with the new American translation and if possible, sell him a subscription. He received her well. She was similarly well received by the Anglican Bishop. She also called on some members of parliament, returning to Kiama well pleased with what she had accomplished on behalf of the Bible Union.

A Primitive Christian Church at Kiama

A little church crystallized around the man (Moses) who had invited her to go to the Illawarra District. Eliza fed him spiritually with some of Campbell's material. The little group of "Primitive Christians" grew to fourteen members and met in the Kiama Court House some six miles away from Eliza's original hut. This involved Eliza with a twelve mile walk over rough ground every week. The attachment of some Calvinistic Baptists to the Primitive Christians ultimately led to the breakup of the little church.

More letters arrived from America. Judge Edmunds wanted her to go to Melbourne to advance the interests of the Bible Union. Further, the foreshadowed National (public) school was scheduled to open soon. It was time to go. But before she closed the school, she wanted it publicly examined to set her achievement on record. It was a semi social occasion. Experts from various fields of endeavour

inspected the children and examined specimens of their work. The school came through with flying colours. A report in the Kiama *Examine*r in December 1860 reads (in part):

> "With the breaking up for the holidays of the Mount Pleasant school, it breaks up probably forever. It was the oldest school in the district and for long periods of time both lately and long ago, it was the only one. For the last two years, it has been under the care of Mrs Davis [sic], who feeling the solemn responsibilities attending the training of minds, and not only for time but eternity, laboured faithfully to fulfil what she rightly deems to be the holy mission of a teacher of youth. On leaving the school, and probably the country, she carried with her the affection of her pupils and the respect and esteem of the parents."[45]

She began packing up her things ready for departure. Flora and fauna specimens she had collected in her "Dove's Nest" she set aside for dispatch to Bethany College. During the packing she ministered to a seriously ill lady and joyfully witnessed a father baptizing his son in the waters of the nearby Pacific Ocean. She received a letter of introduction from the little church and a fine testimonial from the Anglican minister, the Rev. Ashwin, an early critic, who had been one of the examiners of her little school. She also received an appreciative letter from the Governor Sir William Denison. Learning that he was about to leave the colony, she sent his wife a copy of the Sarah Barclay Johnson's *Hadji in Syria*[46]. In response she received an appreciative letter.

With some misgivings she returned to Sydney in early 1861. While there a ship arrived bound for the United States. She loaded all her Bethany artefacts on board, resisting the urgings of letters to return "home." She had already committed herself to go to Melbourne and Adelaide in the interests of the American Bible Union.

Second visit to South Australia

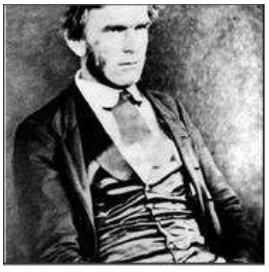
Eliza left Sydney on 20 March 1861 in the barque *Miami*. Running into a perfect storm on the New South Wales south coast, the ship was dismasted and its rudder damaged. The "unseaworthy old tub" as she called it began to drift towards the shore not far from her old haunts in the Illawarra region. With minor repairs, and little food, the damaged ship took twenty days to reach Melbourne. There she called on the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, for the Bible Union and met with a congregation of Disciples (Churches of Christ) in a Melbourne suburb.[47] She introduced the church members to Campbell's works, and they ordered sixty copes of the *Christian System*. Forfeiting her fare, she declined to travel to Adelaide on the *Miami*, she chose the steamship *Wonga Wonga*.[48] This was just as well, because the *Miami* was totally wrecked en route.

George Fife Angas: Banker, philanthropist and founder of South Australia (nla ic-an22839184).

Arriving in Port Adelaide, she entrusted herself to the hospitality of a friend from her visit twenty years before, and after resting for a few days called on entrepreneur and philanthropist George Fife Angas to interest him in the work of the American Bible Union. Angas received her kindly and insisted on paying her expenses from Sydney to Adelaide, proving himself "a true friend." With her usual boldness she approached the governor of South Australia who received her pleasantly and referred her to (Anglican) Bishop Short. She was less well received by the Roman Catholic Bishop who did not appreciate that a woman would want to sell him a 'Protestant' bible or understand why individuals would seek to read it for themselves.

The church at Hindmarsh

At Hindmarsh, Eliza met with a "noble band" who met in a small room to "attend to the ordinances of the Lord in his own appointed way." Foremost among the Disciples was Thomas Magarey, a pioneer of the church there. It was probably in Magarey's home that the little church initially met. Eliza was welcomed into his extended household and facilitated a contact between him and Alexander Campbell. Magarey, a grain merchant and MP, sought to reimburse Campbell for the cost of copies of the *Millennial Harbinger* which years earlier had led him to embrace New Testament Christianity.



Thomas Magarey, c 1840 State Library of South Australia B56079.

Magarey thereafter maintained that contact with Campbell but also corresponded with Wallis, Tickle and Milner of England. For Eliza, this was to be the start of a long relationship with the Hindmarsh church which grew to be one of the largest Churches of Christ in the state. Thomas Magarey's eldest son Alexander married Virginia Campbell a daughter of Colonel (Confederate Army) Alexander Campbell, the patriarch's son.

Ever devoted to her cause, Eliza called on the Crown Solicitor, a Mr. Bakewell, and received an invitation to visit his home. Noticing a likeness between Bakewell's daughter and Virginia Campbell she investigated a possible family connection with the elderly Mrs. Bakewell (Selina Campbell's mother) whom she had nursed years before at Bethany. It turned out that Mr. Bakewell and Mrs. Campbell were cousins. It was a useful connection.

A ghost from the past

Eliza regarded her second stay in Adelaide as very fruitful and was beginning to prepare to return to Sydney. But the discovery via Bakewell that her husband was not dead, as she assumed, filled her with consternation. After much agonising, Eliza sought a legal separation from her husband. There followed a torturous legal process which Eliza, with the support of Bakewell and other Christian friends, eventually won. It turned out that William Davies had remarried possibly believing Eliza dead. Not long after the case, William Davies dropped dead (heart disease) during a visit to Gawler. Though pleased to be free of her "haunting fear" Eliza visited his grave at Gawler and sought to "forgive as she was forgiven."

George Fife Angas, the Magarey's and the Bakewell's all offered love and support, but Eliza decided to leave the colony, departing for New South Wales on the *Ann and Jane*. The outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861 made it impossible to return to the United States.

Return to New South Wales

Eliza was in a bad way when she boarded the ship, so much so that Captain Smith was reluctant to take her as a passenger. But behind a gruff exterior Smith was a kindly man who cared for her. He took the ship, which was on its way to Newcastle, into Port Jackson so she could disembark.

On medical advice, Eliza rested up taking the opportunity to catch up with correspondence from Bethany. From this correspondence she learned that Judge Edmunds of the Bible Union had died. She was delighted to note a letter from W.K. Pendleton in the *Millennial Harbinger* acknowledging receipt of the specimens of flora and fauna she had collected at Kiama. She took the opportunity to write to Alexander Campbell.

In the absence of a Church of Christ in Sydney, Eliza sought to reunite with the Bathurst Street Baptist Church with which she had been associated twenty years before. She wrote to the minister, the Reverend James Voller, expressing a desire to worship with them but outlining her concerns about aspects of Baptist theology and liturgy. The church was happy to accept her, but the Reverend Voller was curious as to what her concerns might be. Eliza took the opportunity to give him a copy of Robert Richardson's *Principles of the Reformation.*[49] Voller's response to this was "If that be Campbellism, I am Campbellite from this day." Eliza recounts that subsequently Voller dropped the title "Reverend"; rent pews were abolished; the Bible was read more, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated weekly. Eliza felt more at home.

In 1870 when Voller moved interstate a more orthodox minister was appointed, and the old ways were reinstated. A consequence was that some members left and joined the reconstituted Sydney Church of

Christ. Voller was an active member of the Bush Missionary Society (also known as the Juvenile Missionary Society) which saw its role in ministering to isolated families through visitation, the conduct of religious services and the sale or gifting of Christian literature including Bibles and New Testaments. This fitted well with Eliza's own mission.

A challenge she could not resist

It was then that Eliza received a challenge she could not resist. A young member of the Bush Missionary Society, Robert Dixson, provocatively told her of a place north of the harbour so degenerate that no respectable person would work or stay there.

Eliza responded to the challenge with these words "If the Lord has a work to be done in that dangerous locality that I can do, let me go to it. I have vowed to the Lord, and to him I will perform my vows".[50] Robert Dixson, described by Eliza as being "the son of my friends Mr. and Mrs [Hugh] Dixson,"[51] and Eliza crossed the Harbour on the appointed day[52] and "walked through several miles of forest land, over rocks and down into gullies, winding up and down, out and in, and treading the way under a broiling sun."[53]

In her poor state of health, the long trek was a struggle for Eliza. Eventually they reached a secluded hut. Too tired to return to town, Eliza opted to spend the night there despite the dilapidated condition of the hut. Robert introduced her to some of the people and then walked back to Lavender Bay to return home.

Setting up a rudimentary bush school

The next morning Eliza asked a child to show her around. She found many isolated huts. She saw dirty, ragged children and equally dirty mothers. She asked them if they would like to send their children to school. Some said they had no school, others said that they had no clothes. Some asked for money to send their children to school. She got the general impression from many that they did not want her living in their midst, but a few expressed their interest. Thus, it was that on 16 June 1862, Eliza opened a school at North Sydney[54]with eighteen students. The area around the hut was cleared, a broken wall repaired, and branches spread over its tin roof to provide protection from the heat. She pledged herself to give the venture a three months' trial.

After the school had been going a week, she was approached by a couple of disreputable, dirty youths who asked Eliza whether she would open a night school for them. Eliza strongly suspected their motives but eventually yielded to their pleas to "gi'e [= give. Eliza is here using the young man's words] it a go." She conceded on the basis that they and others sign a teetotal pledge. This was agreed to, and

some twelve dirty, rowdy young people turned up for the first night. Eliza requested them to come the next night with clean hands and faces.

During the night, Eliza's sleep was disturbed by sounds of rowdiness and drunkenness and thought the worst. It turned out that her students were not responsible for the disturbances, but she feared for her safety when moving around at night. The next night her evening class turned up looking better for the application of soap and water. She invited four of the young men to be her bodyguard. Despite her misgivings (and their reputations) her bodyguard proved reliable. There were no more night disturbances and Eliza began to relax a little with her charges. She persuaded her evening students to sing a few songs (which they enjoyed) and encouraged them to read from the New Testament. She was gradually moving her charges towards worship forms.

When all seemed to be going well, her host (a Mr. Smith) ordered her out of the house. He had several children at the day and evening school. While he was comfortable with them learning to read and write he was uncomfortable with the moral reform that was occurring. It seems his children had begun to question his immoral behaviour. She called the parents together and explained to them her problem. One offered her the share of a room that he had been building for his daughter. This was her best offer.

Somehow, she struggled through the remainder of her three months' trial period and at night reflected on how far she had come: she had a day school where the children had wonderfully improved; a night school where the Bible was read and expounded every night; prayer meetings on Friday nights and Lord's Day morning; a Sunday School; and the Bush Missionary Society regularly preached in her school room. But she realised the transience of the situation and that all would be lost if she pulled out then. She conceived a plan.

Eliza has a vision for a better school

Rising early one morning, she and two members of her bodyguard walked several miles to the home of William Lithgow at St. Leonards.

Lithgow had held high office in the Colonial Administration and had accumulated large estates in the area. The problem was that the affairs of this ageing man (he was then about 78 years of age) were largely controlled by his agent or representative, a man referred to as "Frank." With her usual audacity, Eliza brushed off Frank the "gatekeeper" and insisted on seeing Lithgow personally. She put her case squarely before him. Lithgow was skeptical about the usefulness

William Lithgow.

of her educational venture, but she persuaded him. He offered her ten acres of land, but she only accepted two.

In addition, he covered the cost of the conveyancing. Lithgow, after whom the Blue Mountains township is named, was not unsympathetic to Christian causes and his will (1864) contained several bequests to charities and Christian groups including the large sum of £500 to build a church on the North Shore.

But opposition to the school still existed: Frank connived with Eliza's erstwhile opponent Smith to close her down. St. Thomas' Anglican parish of North Sydney, led by the eminent Reverend W.B. Clarke, was not helpful.[55] The Anglicans regarded the Flat Rock area as part of their parish. But as Eliza pointed out, they had hitherto never shown any interest in the area. However, she managed to gain the support of four leading citizens—James Reid (Presbyterian), Thomas McClelland (Church of England), Richard Johnson (Wesleyan) and William Mason (Roman Catholic) for the registration of her school with the Board of National Education as a 'non-vested national school.' This registration brought with it funds for a teacher's salary and books. Conditions were that a building must be erected and an enrolment of thirty students guaranteed.

Eliza's most pressing problem was to get the building erected. She had the land, now she needed the funds to erect a building. She personally canvassed merchants and businessmen, managing to raise enough money to build a schoolhouse and dwelling. Now in her early forties, she walked many miles each Saturday trying to find a brick maker, a lime maker, a timber merchant and finally workmen. This was in an area which had almost no roads. She bought shingles, hinges and doors etc. on credit one week and begged money the next week to pay for them. She handled all this while maintaining her teaching responsibilities. Never backwards in seeking preferment she wrote to the Governor of New South Wales, Sir John Young, for his patronage and support.

The Governor came to see her, provided funds and allowed her to use his name in fund raising. He referred to Eliza as a "lady in a thousand". Indeed, she was.

The new school is erected

The school and a two-room residence went up on Lithgow's two-acre grant near the corner of what is now Mowbray Road and Penshurst Street.56 Unsurprisingly, Eliza named the school "Bethany." It was officially opened on 30 July 1863. Eliza sent out cards of invitation to the opening and the following notice appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that day.


THE NEW SCHOOL HOUSE, NORTH SYDNEY, will be opened THIS DAY, 30th instant, at noon. A public MEETING will be held at 6 o'clock p.m., when several gentlemen are expected to address the meeting; refreshments provided gratis. The friends of education are earnestly invited to attend. A collection will be made in aid of the funds.

Newspaper clipping, announcing the opening of Eliza Davies' new schoolhouse, 'Bethany'.

Eliza moved into the two unfinished rooms of the cottage before the plaster was dry. Having lived in five different lodgings under filthy conditions in her first year at North Sydney, she was looking forward to living once again in her own "Dove's Nest."

In due course J. Gardiner, a school inspector from the Board of Education, was invited to visit the school. He was impressed by the school's educational standards, and suggested that Eliza might become a national schoolteacher (i.e., employed by the Board). She initially baulked at this, believing that officers of the Board were "infidels." Having resisted being drafted into the denominational system by the Anglicans, she did not want to give up her creed free teaching of the Bible. Gardiner was conciliatory and Eliza visited the office of the Board where she spoke to the Secretary of the Board, William Wilkins. Her broad, non- sectarian approach to teaching the Bible was highly approved. She signed on as a National Schools teacher and was placed on the payroll. Thereafter she maintained warm relations with Wilkins and Gardiner and the latter's successor Forbes.

The penalty for becoming a National School teacher was the requirement to complete and maintain registers and returns of various kinds—all demands on her time. Gardiner told her to relinquish her evening class. She reluctantly did this, finding other situations for most of them.

Further trials

Notwithstanding these civilising developments, the locality was still relatively remote and therefore subject to the vicissitudes of the bush. Eliza describes the threats of bushfires, floods, snakes, wandering cows, violent men and local bushrangers. Flooding of Flat Rock Creek on the short route to Lavender Bay was always a hazard

Despite her increased school activities, she was able to care for some of the sick, provide counselling and organise prayer meetings. She received enough encouragement to keep going. At the next inspection, Gardiner gave her school a glowing report and in consequence she was promoted to a higher grade and an increase in salary (May 1865). The National Education Office wished to utilise her competence by moving her to another school. But Eliza contended that her work at Bethany was not yet finished.

Notwithstanding her regular salary Eliza spent no more than necessary on food and sometimes went without bread. She made additions to her dwelling and the school grounds needed to be cleared and fenced. What little she saved was set aside for the support of the Orphan School and Bethany College with which she remained in contact by letter and through the *Millennial Harbinger*. Further she was mindful that she was getting older and needed to make provision for her future.

Late in 1865, Eliza fell seriously ill. She managed to hitch a ride to visit Dr. Ward. Ward confirmed her self-diagnosis of erysipelas, a bacterial infection which brought with it fever, chills, general unwellness and skin blistering. He provided her with a prescription, told her to drink strong beef tea, chicken broth and port wine and ordered her to bed. Being a teetotaler, she did not approve of Dr. Ward's suggestion that she drink wine or brandy. Somehow, she struggled back to her cottage and was in and out of consciousness for over a week. During that time, she had weird dreams and out-of-body experiences.

A Christmas Celebration

About a fortnight before Christmas, she was much improved and realised she had little time left to arrange Christmas celebrations. These included plans to erect a Christmas tree (never seen by her students), decorate the school, provide gifts for her past and present students and arrange an entertainment. To achieve these ends, she enlisted the support of some local ladies. Some gave money. Some gave food. Others sold her food at heavily discounted prices. E.M. Sayers, a wealthy shipowner, provided bunting to decorate the school.

The proposed entertainment (a "tea meeting") was held at the school on Thursday 28 December 1865. The stated purpose of the occasion was to clear off School debts and to make further improvements. An edited report of the gathering published in the *Empire* (1 January 1866) records:

> "After an excellent tea to which 150 persons sat down…a public meeting was held…E.M. Sayers was voted into the chair……Mr. Palmer read a financial statement….The meeting was addressed by Mr. W. Wilkins….and Mr. J. Gardiner….who spoke in high terms of the excellence of the school and warmly eulogised the efficiency of its instructress, Mrs. Davies. …. Messrs. Walker, Bradley, Parry and others remarked on the advantages which the district had gained by the establishing of a school [as a result of] Mrs. Davies' self-denying labours. On the motion of Mr. Wilkins, a vote of thanks was unanimously accorded to the Bush Missionaries for conducting divine service on Sundays."[57]

There is little doubt that the establishment of the school had attracted settlers to the area. Eliza reports more settled conditions, the formation of a municipal council (1865) and improved roads. She was delighted that many of her former students, including members of her old bodyguard, had married and

settled down in the area. Over these improved roads came visitors including the distinguished evangelist and Bethany graduate H.S. Earl then ministering with great success in Adelaide. With him came the Magarey's with whom she had remained in contact.[58] She resumed her task of improving the school and with help of her older boys planted a garden and fruit trees. But for all these improvements the area could still be rather frightening. She tells numerous scary stories about snakes, centipedes, bushfires and floods.

Bethany School becomes Willoughby Public School

The year 1866 was an important one for Eliza and for education in NSW. In that year Henry (later Sir) Parkes was successful in negotiating through the Legislative Assembly the Public Schools Act which aimed at replacing the separate National Board of Education and Denominational by a single Council on Education.

Plaque outside Willoughby Public School (from Willoughby Council).

The move was strongly opposed by denominational groups which had been receiving subsidies. By virtue of this Act, the Bethany National School became the North Sydney National Public school. The name of the school was changed again and in 1891 became Willoughby Public School. This rightly claims to be the first public school on Sydney's North Shore. This event is commemorated by a plaque set in the pavement outside the school (image left).

In July of that year, news came that her mentor Alexander Campbell, with whom she remained in correspondence, had died (March 1866). Eliza wrote a letter of consolation to Mrs. Campbell. She also wrote to George Fife Angas telling him of the news and thanking him for his continued support of her at North Sydney. Word was received from the American consul that with the cessation of the American Civil War it was now safe to return to the USA. It was an attractive idea, but other events intervened. Late in the year, her erysipelas returned with a vengeance.

Sightseeing and pamphleteering along the railways

With a return to health Eliza used improvements in the rail network to see the region around Sydney. The line to Mittagong was opened in 1867. Over this line Eliza travelled to Wingecarribee to meet her old friends from her Kiama days, Mr. and Mrs. Moses. The Western line reached the Blue Mountains in 1867. Having read Charles Darwin's account of his visit to the Blue Mountains before she left America, she travelled there early in 1869, visiting Mt. Victoria and Govett's leap. She even ventured

down the amazing Zig Zag railway then under construction. Though she had resigned, or was resigning, from the American Bible Union, the old habits of a bible colporteur died hard. She could not resist giving out tracts to all and sundry and later sent a parcel of literature to several fettlers she met en route. Nor could she resist giving educational advice to a young teacher she met in the Mt. Victoria area.

The highlight of 1868 was the selection of her school to join the public welcome in Sydney domain to Prince Alfred, the second son of Queen Victoria (January 1868). In March 1868, the Prince was attending a picnic at Clontarf when a slightly deranged man, a Fenian named O'Farrell, attempted to assassinate him. This was a time of simmering tension between Irish Catholics and non-Catholics. This tension spilled over into the debate about education. Eliza described this incident and public reaction to it in some detail. Money donated by the colonists was used to fund the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

In 1869, having spent eight years at the school, Eliza decided that it was time to return to America. The school had now reached a mature stage of development and a successor was available to take her place.

But a letter from Thomas Magarey caused her to rethink. She gives no clue as to what this letter was about, but it is assumed that Magarey raised with her the educational challenges of inner Adelaide. "Perhaps," she conjectured, "I might pioneer another work for others to reap the benefit."[59]


Davies Eliza.
HISTORY.
DATE.

Eliza Davies 'resignation accepted 6 December 1869' (from the NSW Teachers' Roll, 1869-1908).

She resigned from the Council of Education and received a fine testimonial from the Secretary. Eliza felt greatly honoured by this and spoke highly of her association with Messrs. Wilkins, Gardiner and Forbes. She regarded the results of her own work as sufficient recognition.

The bush in which she had laboured was now a thriving village; three of her former night scholars had married and two had become teachers. The Hon. Henry Parkes, Colonial Secretary, added his thanks to those already expressed.

Third Voyage to South Australia

Eliza had left Adelaide nine years before in some distress. But she missed the company of her fellow "Primitive Christians" and now looked forward to enjoying the company of fellow believers.

She left Sydney on the small (690 tons) steamship *You Yangs* on 7 February 1870. After the usual small ship dramas of sea-sickness bad weather and slightly demented passengers, Eliza was pleased to land

in Melbourne where she spent a fortnight. He she caught up with Silvanus Magarey (second son of Thomas and later an eminent doctor) and other old friends. She was also pleased to meet the American evangelists, Surber and Carr, who had established a school. She travelled to Port Adelaide aboard the SS *Aldinga* without further drama. With the assistance of a shipboard friend, Henry Bundey (William Henry Bundey, a prominent barrister), she travelled by train to Adelaide station where she was met by Thomas Magarey's wife Elisabeth.[60]

A meeting with George Fife Angas

Eliza enjoyed hospitality in the Magarey home and from there visited her supporter George Fife Angas is his country house, Lindsay Park, sixty miles from Adelaide. Impressed with her work in NSW, Angas asked her whether she would open a similar school in Adelaide. Angas was concerned about the spread of cheap Roman Catholic schools and their influence among the young and poor. He liked Eliza's brand of creed free Christian education. Having been previously challenged by Thomas Magarey about the need for a Christian school for the poor, Eliza was already interested. Angas offered support. He was a great benefactor of the poor and was the sponsor of the Hindmarsh Town Mission which was headed up by Thomas Harkness of Hindmarsh Church of Christ. Like Angas, Magarey supported the teaching of the Bible in schools and opposed giving public money to denominational schools.

A school for the poor at Hindmarsh

Eliza opened her school for the poor in Hindmarsh. It is not known where this school first met. It may have been in the premises owned by Thomas Magarey where the original Hindmarsh Sunday School first met in 1854.[61] The following press announcement provides details:

> **Board of Education Report 27 June 1870.**
>
> Hindmarsh: Mrs. Eliza Davies wrote informing the board she had opened a school for poor children in Robert Street and had an attendance of 45 scholars. She applied for a licence stating that she held testimonials from the New South Wales Council of Education under which she laboured for seven and a half years. The Board regretted that they had no funds to help a school such as this and stated that the application might be made at a future time.[62]

Hindmarsh Chapel c.1860. The small building on the left may have been the site of Eliza's original school.

The suggestion that the school was originally located in the Robert Street premises owned by Magarey is reinforced by Eliza's advice that Magarey headed the list of those who subscribed money to purchase school equipment. However, these initial premises proved too small for the numbers desiring to attend and no teacher's residence was supplied, necessitating Eliza living in a boarding house.

New premises at Bowden

In the meantime, Angas bought a partly derelict flour mill which was converted into a schoolhouse. A large fully equipped playground was provided, and a teacher's residence was built. When the schoolhouse was completed, Eliza moved her school into it. Several small schools with inadequate facilities were amalgamated with it. While the teacher's cottage was being built, Angas allowed Eliza to stay in his town residence at Prospect Hall. Prospect Hall overlooked the village of Bowden (near Hindmarsh) in which Angas took a special interest. The new school became known as Bowden Public School. Bowden was essentially a working-class area.

Among the schools amalgamated with the Bowden School was one led by the young Sarah Doudy (nee Stanes) who later became a prominent educator in South Australia. Stanes became associated with Davies in the new school as an assistant teacher. Like Davies she was a conservative Christian and temperance advocate. Later she wrote a novel based on Eliza's verbal account of her travels with Charles Sturt.[63]

Some seventy or eighty boys and girls poured into the school on its opening morning—whooping and climbing across desks as they came. She described these children as not only the "lowest and poorest, but the most vicious and profane youngsters she had ever come in contact with." She believed that some had been expelled from other schools. It is hard to believe that these are the worst children she had "ever come into contact with" given the quality of youngsters she had encountered in New South Wales. But she had been successful there, and accordingly set her aim to transform the new school into a "blessing in the neighbourhood." Eliza had strong faith in the Bible as an instrument of spiritual and moral formation. Armed with that and aided by a couple of assistant teachers and student "prefects" she set about her task. She even enlisted the support of an ex-army sergeant to drill the boys in the

playground while she "drilled the girls in the classroom." The girls were taught to sew and made garments for the poor. Sarah Magarey and another friend attended weekly to hear some classes recite.

Progress and growth

By the end of the year, she was installed in her cottage and felt she had made good progress with the school. When Angas visited the school, he was delighted with its growth (now around 150 students) and the "good order" which prevailed. He offered to pay for a Christmas "tea party." Such a tea party was a novel experience for most of her students. Part of a press report on the event reads:

> W.I. Magarey accepted the chair. Mr. Hussey, as one well acquainted with the working of the school, made a statement.[64] The report was followed by a magic lantern exhibition kindly given by Mr. A. Magarey[65], which afforded great pleasure to the juveniles. At intervals the children sang some of their school melodies, led by Mrs. Harris. When they sang the National Anthem, they were loudly cheered, and the pleasant entertainment was brought to a close.

In just a few months, supported by George Fife Angas and Thomas Magarey, Eliza achieved more than she achieved in six or seven years at North Sydney.

Thomas Jefferson Gore c. 1870, State Library of South Australia B45121.

In Adelaide Eliza found the wider sense of Christian communion she missed in Sydney; this "sense of Christian communion" she referred to elsewhere as "the brotherhood." She mentions that "brethren (HS) Earl and (TJ) Gore were conducting a class of young men, preparing them for ministry and new churches were being planted in various part of the colony."[66] At the opening of a place of worship, a tea-party would be given, and all other churches would be invited to come and celebrate the occasion. Such celebration greatly enhanced the bonds of faith. This was a time of great growth for Churches of Christ in South Australia—partly due to the evangelistic efforts of Earl and Gore.

Revisiting Lake Alexandrina

At one such tea party three young ministers were discussing how they would spend a forthcoming holiday. They were considering an outing to Lake Alexandrina and invited Eliza to help them decide. Unsurprisingly, she decided for a visit to the lake, the region she had traversed thirty-one years before with Mrs. Sturt and Julia Gawler, becoming the first women to cross the lake. The outing was duly arranged, and Eliza discussed in detail her visit to the mouth of the Murray River and the Coorong. Thereafter she made further trips to the seaside in her midsummer holidays.

On one of these holiday forays, she visited Point McLeay where a government school and farm for Aborigines has been established. She thought the school and farm were well conducted. Elementary instruction was given, the students were fed and clothed and taught rudimentary farming skills. These Aborigines were the descendants of the naked "savages" that had confronted her years before. She noted that she was probably the first white lady this lake tribe had seen. She also enjoyed visiting the Botanical Gardens and regularly took her students there for nature lessons, hiring a railway car on a train to do so. In the Gardens the students examined "specimens of Zoology, Ornithology or Ichthyology". In this way she sought to make school life attractive and enrich the educational experience. The children never presented any problems and the curator of the Gardens, Dr. Shomburg, was very supportive. Cuttings received from the latter were planted by Eliza and blossomed into flowers. Touched by their beauty Eliza took bunches of flowers to infrequently visited hospital wards. She also paid pastoral visits to a mental asylum.

Several social functions and demonstrations/examinations of children's work were held in the school. Eliza reports a press account of the holding of a soiree to "elevate the tastes" of parents and the neighbourhood generally. For this she sold tickets, printed circulars and hired a grand piano. Various entertainers and singers, including Sarah Stanes, were engaged to perform. W.J. Magarey JP chaired this meeting; and other prominent citizens, including John H. Angas (son of G.F. Angas) and Dr. Kidner (Hindmarsh church), attended. However, this press article can't be found in newspaper records, and there is confusion over when it occurred. A survey of press reports indicate that public functions were held at the school in December 1871, July 1872, December 1872 and December 1873. From Eliza's account it appears that the school was also opened on Christmas day in 1873 to provide a dinner for the neighbourhood "poor, halt and blind."[67] This was paid for by Angas.

Examiners' reports expressed great satisfaction with the work of the school. The student results exceeded those of more up-market, better endowed schools. Angas himself wrote expressing appreciation for what she had achieved and sent a cheque. Eliza, who had generally followed the NSW Council of Education syllabus, concluded that the schools of South Australia were generally inferior to those in NSW. She was, however, worn out and suffered occasional blackouts. She commented, "Had I a smaller school, or more efficient assistants, or been less anxious to have a model one…or cared less for the well-being of those I had in charge, I might have had an easier time". She wanted a rest.

Worn out, ready to move on

About this time, she learned that Evangelist T.J. Gore and his wife were returning to the United States for a visit and desired to return with them. For many years, she had desired to visit the elderly Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Gano and Mrs. Smith "before they reached the end of 'their pilgrimage'". She wrote to

Angas enclosing a medical certificate. Angas was reluctant to release her and wanted her to bind herself to returning after a holiday. He finally sent her a letter, thanking her for contribution and hoping that she might return replenished. She received a handsome gift from some of the pupils: an elegant ring; one large opal, two emeralds and two amethysts set in Australian gold. She said a tearful goodbye to them all. The night before the travelers, Mrs. and Mrs. Gore, Mark Collis and Eliza Davies were to depart, a farewell tea party was held for them at the church (presumably Hindmarsh). For Eliza this was a painful event—being the third time she had left the colony in distress. The next day a large crowd travelled by train to the port for their departure. Eliza and one or two others were driven to the ship by William Magarey (Thomas's nephew). As the ship slipped its moorings in April 1874, Eliza wondered whether she would live to see America. It was, however, the beginning of another chapter of her "earnest life."

Return to the United States

The vessel began to roll as soon as it entered the Gulf and Eliza predictably became seasick. She took to her berth while still able to walk and only went on deck once during the two or three-day trip to Melbourne. The ship stayed in Melbourne for a week. Eliza reports only going to hear "Bro. Martin" speak. In his account Gore who visited several churches during the stopover described "Martin as a fine speaker, coming from Kentucky". Gore was a Kentuckian.

The *Australian Christian Advocate* indicates that Mark Collis spoke to a large and attentive audience in the Temperance Hall, North Fitzroy, on 25 April 1874.[68] Collis was converted by Earl and was on his way to train for ministry. Attracted by the reputation of McGarvey he was bound for Kentucky University (now Transylvania University). Collis was the third "Australian" (he was born in England in 1851) to travel overseas to study for ministry. He subsequently had a long and fruitful ministry and was for a long time associated with the College of the Bible and the Kentucky Female Orphan School—places close to Eliza's heart.

Revisiting North Sydney

A further stopover in Sydney allowed the Gores to visit with the Kingsbury's and the Bardsley's at the Newtown church (now much improved). Eliza took the opportunity of visiting her old Bush Missionary Society friends Mrs. and Mrs. H. Dixson. Mrs. Dixson placed her carriage and driver at Eliza's disposal, and she visited Wilkins and former inspectors Gardiner and Forbes in the Council of Education office.

Then she crossed the harbour by ferry, hired a carriage, and was driven to North Sydney. That it was now possible to drive to North Sydney was a measure of just how far the municipality had evolved. There were now many more houses and the village had morphed into a municipality (Willoughby).

Not surprisingly she visited the school first. The school's master invited her to spend the day with him and his wife, but she did not have time to accept this courtesy. She saw faces which she recognised and there were tears all round. She took time to visit her former physician, Dr Ward, who had shown great kindness to her— sometimes treating her without charge. Two of her former pupils (a brother and sister) later presented her with a basket of oranges to eat on the remainder of her voyage. With the oranges was a letter which she was asked to read after departure from Sydney. The letter expressed deep appreciation for all that she had done. Eliza attributed the changes in the Willoughby area to the power of the Word of God. She would have been delighted to learn that forty years later a former student of McGarvey, Thomas Bagley, opened a Church of Christ in the same municipality.

On Friday 8 May, Eliza attended a tea party at the Sydney Church of Christ (Elizabeth Street). Matthew Wood Green had been serving at the church but had moved on to Melbourne. At the tea-party she met several former friends whom she had met at the Baptist church during the time of the Reverend Voller. These had been persuaded to change their affiliation after reading literature that Eliza had given them years before and reading the bible more. The tea-party was fitting farewell. Eliza noted presciently, "It seems hard to get the truth to prevail in Sydney, all powerful as it is. I hope the day is not far distant when the people respond to the call". However, Haley who followed Green at Elizabeth Street said of the Newtown and Sydney churches that "some of the finest men and women with whom he had ever associated in gospel labour he had met in these two congregations."[69]

Goodbye Australia, Hello America

On 9 May, the travelers boarded the *SS City of Adelaide* bound for California. Reaching Fiji, the travelers attended a church service. Eliza was carried away by the powerful Fijian singing, "charmed with the pathos, power and melody." Rhetorically she asked, "How many of our Christian Churches in America shall we enter and find every member of the congregation with Bible and hymnbook in hand…how many Christian men and women anywhere would give their undivided attention to the preacher? "

SS City of Adelaide.

The ship stood to in Fiji for several days; the captain was apparently delaying in order to affect a rendezvous with other ships. Presently the *Tartar* from San Francisco hove to. On the *Tartar* they met with J. J. and Mrs. Haley who were heading for Sydney Church of Christ.

Presently the *Cyphrenes* for New Zealand came alongside. After opportunities for fraternisation (and probably exchange of mail) the ensemble of ships broke up and they went their respective ways.

On 20 May, the *City of Adelaide* resumed its voyage and reached the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. Here the passengers were treated right royally, having the opportunity of meeting the queen and other members of the local royal family. Eliza was captured by the beauty of the place and by the missionary challenge it presented. Both Eliza and Gore commented on the different outlooks of the Hawaiians and the Fijians, the Hawaiians gradually adopting the vices of white civilization. As Gore put it, the former "are Christianized and civilized, the latter only Christianized." After further storms at sea, the shipped entered the Golden Gate and dropped anchor in the Bay of San Francisco. The travelers remained a week in San Francisco and visited a church where Gore preached. Both Gore and Eliza were very conscious of the relaxed attitude towards Sunday observance in San Francisco compared with Australian cities. They enjoyed meeting Dr Thomas Porter who remembered with great affection his time in ministry in Australia.

Then began the last leg of their journey - by train to the Midwest. According to Eliza, the Gores diverted to Chicago before moving on to Kentucky. Eliza and Collis continued to Lexington. Collis sought to enroll at Kentucky University, but Eliza travelled on to Midway, arriving there about eight days after their departure from San Francisco. At Midway she realised a long-held desire to meet the ageing Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Gano. By train she proceeded to Bethany to visit the elderly Mrs. Campbell, the wife of "the greatest man she ever knew." While there she visited God's Acre, the last resting place of some she dearly loved. She wove three garlands and hung these as monuments to her "wee pet lamb", the beautiful and saintly Clarinda, and her illustrious father, Alexander Campbell. So ended Eliza's second voyage around the world. She had at last come home.

And they all lived happily ever afterwards?

Mark Collis was deeply disappointed to find that McGarvey under whom he intended to study was no longer teaching at Kentucky University. He decided to return to Australia, but Robert Milligan, the president, persuaded him to stay at least one year. During that year a reorganization within the University led to the establishment of the College of the Bible with McGarvey as professor. Collis spent the rest of his career in Kentucky; he married a Kentucky girl and returned to Australia only once in his long and illustrious career in ministry. Indirectly his path would once again cross that of Eliza Davies. He became a curator of the Kentucky University, a trustee of the Female Orphan School and chairman of its Board and the Executor of Eliza Davies' estate. He performed his last marriage service at one hundred years of age and died in 1955 at the age of 103.[70]

Professor Mark Collis (Courtesy of Little Memorial Library, Midway University).

Thomas Gore and his wife stayed for a while in "his old Kentucky home" at Bloomfield before going to Lexington. There he met McGarvey, Milligan, Lard and Graham. Surber, who ministered at Lygon Street, Carlton, Victoria, in the late 1860s, stayed with them briefly at Bloomfield. They also spoke with Carr who also served at Lygon Street. Carr was still involved in general evangelistic work. They heard from Earl and learned that he and his family were well. After three months the Gores returned to Australia. Gore continued to edit the *Christian Pioneer* and is credited with being one of the founders of the Movement in South Australia. He retired from active ministry in 1915 and died in 1925.

The Female Orphan School at Midway Kentucky?

Over the years it has changed form and outreach and is now known as Midway University. It had around 1800 students in 2014. It is linked to the Disciples of Christ and remains primarily a women's college—men are admitted to online courses and some evening classes. Until recently a scholarship in Eliza's name was still being awarded.

Little more is known for certain about Eliza Davies, but it is hard to believe that a woman with her determination and dedication simply "gave up". Eliza herself provided a clue. Regarding her impending second trip to Australia, she had written:

> "I closed school in June 1857 for the holidays. I reopened it in the same family, in the same school-room in the fall of 1877 after a twenty years' vacation. I had for my pupils the children of my former pupils."[71]

She is referring here to the small private school she had been conducting in the Gano home at Georgetown, Kentucky. The timing fits, and it was at Georgetown that she wrote her autobiography.

Some corroboration for Eliza's ongoing involvement comes from the *Christian Standard* of 10 October 1874. Following an introduction by Selina Campbell who briefly recounts Eliza's story (it had not yet appeared in print), the journal's editor commented as follows:

> We give this introduction with pleasure to our readers, especially as Sister D., having learned of the financial needs of Bethany College and having a great love for that institution, and not wishing to be idle, has determined to devote her time gratuitously for a few months to soliciting for the College....Let

> it be known, therefore, that her mission is an honorable one, and that she is entitled to the confidence and encouragement of all whom she may visit. At present she is pursuing her mission in Kentucky.

Selina's introduction provides some corroboration for Eliza's story. And the editor's introduction indicates that she was still active. It seems that old educators never die.

The Story of an Earnest Life was published in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1881. The Preface to the book was dated December 1880 and was written (significantly) at Georgetown, Kentucky. The date and location are of interest. Georgetown was the "hometown "of the Ganos and (at one stage) of the reformer Barton W. Stone. Eliza indicates in the preface that the book was written reluctantly, but that she was finally persuaded to so by Robert Richardson, Alexander Campbell's biographer. Even with extensive diaries and journal clippings her book could not have been written in a hurry. So, it is clear from the foregoing that Davies remained very active until at least the date of the book's publication in 1881.

Eliza died on 27 March 1888. An obituary, probably written by her old friend J.W. McGarvey reads:

> "Her last sickness continued about two weeks and during part of that time it was very painful. She bore it with the courage and patience which have always distinguished her....Her friends knew she was very dangerously ill, not they were prepared for so sudden a departure". [72]

Eliza Davies' headstone, Lexington KY.

She had of course several serious illnesses during her career, including recurring bouts of the painful erysipelas.

She did not realise her dream of being buried in God's Acre Bethany, but instead was laid to rest in a cemetery at Lexington. A simple plaque marks her last resting place.

McGarvey noted that despite her hardships in Australia which taxed the credulity of some, she was always striving to save money for "this or that benevolent institution." The executor of her estate, Professor Mark Collis, estimated that her estate was valued at more than $15,000, a considerable sum of money in 1888. Her bequests indicate where her loyalties lay: The Orphan School $5,000; Women's' Board of Missions Indianapolis bank stock worth $360; The Woman's Auxiliary and the Ladies Aid Society of the Broadway church Lexington;[73] personal friends in Australia and the USA about $1800; the College of the Bible, Lexington $5,500 plus any other sum left over after paying out her bequests. To the Female Orphan School, she gave the plates and the copyright of *The Story of an Earnest Life*.

Marge R. Lester, who extensively researched the life of Eliza in the early 1980s has pointed to a curious rider attached to the bequests made to women's organizations:

> "I declare the receipt of any woman or Treasurer or Secretary of any of the institutions herein before named shall be a sufficient discharge to my executor for the monies bequeathed to them respectively."

The significance of this, suggests Lester, is that at that time the signature of a woman on legal or business documents carried no weight unless counter-signed by man.[74] Eliza's rider overcame that restriction. This attitude is confirmed by her non submissive, but respectful, attitude to men as illustrated in her autobiography. It is also consistent with her plainly stated view of women in ministry as outlined in her Kiama "declaration" of 1860—see Appendix following. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that she was a pioneer feminist.

Lester has also pointed out that though her personal effects are listed in her will, journals and papers that she must have accumulated were missing. It's possible that having written a comprehensive autobiography she destroyed these. This is a common mistake made by historians. It is interesting to note that among her personal effects was an Australian gold coiled breastpin. This was probably the farewell gift from the students in Adelaide.

But is it all true?

In his obituary, McGarvey mentions that he'd been asked many times whether the writer, "believes her marvelous story to be true." McGarvey's response to this question was:

> "He [McGarvey] has invariably answered, because of his knowledge of the woman…could answer in no other way, that apart from unintentional exaggerations, the result of deep feeling, and the lapse of time between the event and the writing, he implicitly believes the whole of it."

This is akin to the view of this writer who has been able to corroborate much of her story from other sources such as newspapers and books. Hyperbole? Yes. Some minor mistakes in dating? Yes. But the main thrust of the story, as distinct from some details, seems to be correct.

A.T. Saunders who researched Eliza's story in 1924-1925 reported similar problems. He noted some misspelling of names (e.g., "Gawlor" for "Gawler"), some incorrect dates, e.g., her dating of the death of Colonel Light and the incorrect identification of a ship's name. (Eliza claimed that in 1861 she travelled to Adelaide in the steamer *Wonga Wonga*. Saunders claims that this is incorrect, that she travelled on the *Balclutha*). Eliza's habit of not using many dates and not using people's names was also an annoyance

that obliged Saunders to write several letters to clarify information. This writer has suffered in the same way and has used the internet extensively. But Saunders' research gives comfort regarding the essential accuracy of the story.[75]

The publisher of a Churches of Christ related publishing company (College Press, Joplin, Missouri), Don De Welt, to whom this writer referred the book to for possible republishing, commented as follows:

> "I wish I could take all her experiences at face value, but she tells them in such a grandiose saintly style it becomes almost impossible to accept. If someone could re-write her book in present day mode of expression, we might have an interest."

This too is a fair comment. But as others pointed out she was writing within a particular literary genre and social context. There are stylistic similarities to the authors of 19th century fictional stories of heroines (e.g., the Bronte sisters) with their melodramatic, introspective and romantic imaginings. In this technological age, unadorned writing styles are required. This writer has endeavoured to retell the story as De Welt recommended—in the "present day mode of expression." This, however, has been done at the expense of some detail.

Concerns about the book's accuracy have not precluded secular writers from making good use of the work to throw light on issues in Australian history. Edgar Beale, for example, uses the book as a source for his reappraisal of the role of Charles Sturt in the story of Australian exploration. On a whimsical note, he writes:

> "Despite the Pauline injunction to the contrary, not all servants under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honour. For years the Sturt household included a girl named Eliza who was so good that one must wonder how her digestion coped with the butter which her mouth could not melt". [76]

But he goes on to say "There need be no qualms in accepting Eliza's veracity in her observations about Charles Sturt and his relationships with his wife Charlotte. He then quotes from her numerous times to support the thesis he is advancing. In a footnote he comments:

> "The author is further satisfied upon another ground. For some years Eliza ran a school in the Illawarra district which as his home this author knows well; he has no hesitation in pronouncing her facts on this part of her memoirs generally reliable."

Mrs. Henry Doudy (nee Sarah Stanes) in the introduction of her book *Magic of Dawn* writes:
"In my youth I frequently met a lady who told me that she, when a young girl accompanied Captain Sturt and Mrs. Sturt to South Australia

> .... How Mrs. Sturt, Julia Gawler and herself had been part of the Gawler exploration party when Mr. Bryan was unhappily lost.... Some year ago, this lady published her autobiography, and a copy came into my possession. I found much there in of what she previously told me."[77]

As previously mentioned, the young Sarah Stanes had been a teacher at Hindmarsh. She later became a leading educator in Adelaide. She used Eliza's account as the basis of her fictional account.

Concluding comments

Eliza was a woman of relatively low social status and in highly stratified society. Yet she mingled easily with aristocrats and the wealthy. There may have been something about her directness that appealed. Though relatively unschooled she became very erudite: learning from writings as diverse as those of Charles Darwin and Alexander Campbell. From Darwin she learned much about the natural world; from Alexander Campbell she learned much about the spiritual word. She was a quick learner, and the benefits of education she sought to pass on to others. In her approach to education was blended both a love of the Bible and an appreciation of nature (no matter how much natural events frightened her at times). Without some appreciation of the late Reformation, it would be difficult to understand Eliza's motivation. Some aspects of her church involvement have been elaborated for the sake of understanding the context and the milieu in which she operated.

Eliza crisscrossed the world at interesting times. It was the birth of the age of science. It was also an age of exploration in Australia. In the background of her accounts of social conditions in NSW and South Australia one can see the enormous advances in urbanisation. On her visit to Adelaide in 1839 the Colony was little more than three years old. On her last visit in 1872 it was a small city— those who bade her farewell caught a train to Port Adelaide. On her first venture into North Sydney in 1862 she scrambled over rocks and creeks to reach a collection of bush huts. On her last visit in 1874 she travelled by coach over a road to reach municipal Willoughby.

She was also a participant in the early years of the Restoration Movement[78] in the USA and in Australia. Where Eliza has provided pen portraits of some of these pioneers the writer has seen fit to include them. She was also a pioneer in the development of educational systems and philosophies in both NSW and South Australia. Issues of state aid to denominational schools and the use of scripture in school remain live issues.

Yet Eliza's contribution to the Restoration Movement and the amelioration of the poor has largely been ignored in the histories of the Movement. As the late Professor Ron Graham[79] of the Lexington Theological Seminary points out, there is no indexed mention of her in standard works of the

Campbell/Stone movement, viz., Garrison, W.E. and DeGroot, A.T. *The Disciples of Christ: A History*, rev. 1958 or Tucker, W.E. and McAllister, L.G. *A Journey of Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* 1975. Nor is there any mention of her in the comprehensive *Encyclopaedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* [Eerdmans, 2004] which has much to say about John T. Johnson, the Ganos, and Lewis Pinkerton and others mentioned in her autobiography.

She deserves more attention.

Eliza Davies (*front piece of Story of an Earnest Life)

APPENDIX

ON THE BIBLE, EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN

In two long letters (each about 2,000 words) published anonymously in the Kiama Examiner over the nom de plume of "A Stranger" in February and March 1860, Eliza set out her views on the Bible, its role in education and on the place of women in the church. These letters explain much of Eliza's motivation and her rationale. Unsurprisingly the style reflects something of the discursiveness of Alexander Campbell. Some extracts follow:

On the Bible

"The same omniscient Being that created the oxygen, the hydrogen, the nitrogen, the carbon and other elements of our globe- and arranged and compounded them in reference to each other, and to the wants of each other, and to the wants and capacities of every species of organised being, has most benevolently framed the Holy Scriptures, and adapted them to the entire moral, social, and religious wants and circumstances of the whole human race."

On the failure of the church

"Why have not the kingdoms of this world yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Anointed? Why has not every city become a Jerusalem? It is not because the Bible has changed. It is not because the Bible is not adapted to the genius, wants, and circumstances of human nature. But it is simply because the followers of Jesus Christ have not always, like the Primitive Christians, continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching."

On the Bible in Education

"I have heard intelligent and well-read men plead for a national system of education and point to Scotland and America being in advance of other nations, morally and intellectually. These gentlemen spoke well. But if they had said the Bible in the National schools was the cause of the superiority they would have spoken better and would have given honour where honour is due.... Preaching on Sundays, or religious exhortation at stated periods by ministers will not supply the place of Bible training. "

On Women

"But the highest encomium pronounced in Christian history on woman, is not that she was a 'philosopheress', or prophetess, a deferential wife, a devoted mother, a dutiful daughter, a gentle sister, a wise queen; or that she bathed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the tresses of her

hair; it is not that she was at the cross last of all his friends contemplating the fearful agonies of his death; but that she was first at the sepulchre in the early dawn of the first day of the week making her way with great moral courage through the Roman guard with the full intent to embalm his lacerated body. In honour of which affectionate and grateful devotion he presented himself to her in that same body as the triumphant victor over death and the grave; and commissioned her to be his Prime Minister and first Missionary, to proclaim to her mourning companions the glad news of the Gospel of his resurrection."

On the Bible in the education of women

"The Bible alone teaches a woman her whole duty to God and man and the daughter of the present generation will probably be the mothers in the next.... Fathers see to it that your daughters be educated. Never mind the shillings and pence it costs at present, your grandsons will repay you with compound interest—they may be great men. Not great like Caesar, stained with blood, but like a Christian, great in good."

Harold E Hayward
March 2016

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[1] Central Book Concern, Cincinnati, 1881.
2 "Some Experiences of Eliza Davies" No. 74 September 1981.
3 "Story of an Earnest Life" (SEL) p.26.
4 Davies frequently used initial rather than full names.
5 For example, the need to produce evidence of a Holy Spirit experience as a prelude to admission to the church.
6 Possibly missionaries.
7 Balmain.
8 Relates to the massacre of some 30 Indigenous people. Seven convicts or ex-convicts were hung for the crime on 18 December 1838.
9 Charlotte was born in England but grew up in France.
10 Possibly in the role of a servant to Mrs Sturt. The passenger manifest for the *John Pirie* does not mention her name but notes that Mrs. Sturt was accompanied by two servants.
11 Davies described him as a "Calvinist Baptist."
12 Martin was subsequently sacked and replaced by Hay.
13 At some stage Munro had been influenced by missionaries associated with the London Missionary Society. He exercised a kindly influence in the little village that grew up around him. Eliza faithfully records all this. The highest pointing on nearby Cape Barren Island, Mount Munro, is named after him.
14 One source considers that Julia Gawler was Governor Gawler's sister (Saunders, A.T. "Eliza Davies and Infant Adelaide" Observer, Adelaide 1925 p.49).
15 Face burned while trying to light a signal flair.
16 A.T. Saunders in an account published in South Australian *Observer* (7/2/1925) described Charlotte's action as "occult reasoning."
17 1 Corinthians chapter 13 was, however, a favourite chapter for Campbell.
18 SEL pp. 239-240.
19 Scotch Baptist practice was influenced by the Sandemanians who had a "love lunch" after the morning service before communion in the afternoon. Alexander Campbell was often formally addressed as "Mr. Campbell" as a mark of respect.
20 He was always known as "Mr. Campbell". This was a long-standing tradition that deliberately played down the title "Reverend."
21 After 1863, West Virginia.
22 *Memoires*, p 562. Richardson was an early associate of Campbell and a professor at Bethany College.
23 Probably descendants of Robert Tener of Ireland who had been influenced by Thomas Campbell.
24 SEL pp.273-274.
25 SEL p.279.
26 Believed to be the aunt of Alexander.
27 SEL p287.
28 Refer Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address of 1809 particularly.
29 SEL p.294.
30 SEL pp.282-283.
31 SEL p. 284.
32 Broadly defined as "the availability and accessible to the scripture to ordinary people who understood the context, and the rules of grammar and reasoning."
33 He subsequently became a chaplain in the Confederate army. He may have been related to Major General George Pickett who led the famous charge at Gettysburg which marked the high-water market of the Confederation. In later life J.D. Pickett became associated with McGarvey in Kentucky.
34 Bethany is not far from the Ohio River, a tributary of the Mississippi.

35 Johnson helped negotiate the union of the Campbell and Stone movements. Scott was an evangelist in the Stone-Campbell movement and is regarded as one of the four founding leaders along with the Campbells and Barton W. Stone.
36 Giovannoli, H. *Kentucky Female Orphan School: A History* Midway, Kentucky 1930 p.21.
37 Walter Scott 1796 – 1861 is regarded as one of the four founding members, along with Barton W. Stone and the Campbell of the so –called Stone-Campbell movement.
38 SEL p.306.
39 Known for excellent oratory as the "Apollos of the West". He was a close confidant of both Campbell and Stone and played a leading role in bringing their respective movements together.
40 Richard Gano later became a general in the Confederate army. After discharge he resumed life and a doctor and evangelist. Like his father he was very successful as a preacher.
41 This new version of the Bible sought to update the language of the long-accepted King James Version. The involvement of Alexander Campbell as a translator aroused controversy. Baptists generally preferred the KJV but Campbell's efforts on the new translation particularly irritated some.
42 The Bethany Cemetery where many of the Campbell family and early pioneers are buried.
43 SEL pp 348-349.
44 Before coming to Australia, Eliza had read some of the work of Charles Darwin and had become very interested in the natural world.
45 *Examiner* (Kiama) Saturday 29 December 1860, p.2.
46 Published in 1858. Sarah Barclay Johnson was the daughter of Dr. James T. Barclay the first American Christian Mission Society supported missionary. In later life Barclay's wife, Julia Sowers Barclay was a close companion of Selina Campbell. The Barclays are buried in the God's Acre Cemetery at Bethany. Davies choice of this book is interesting because it indicates that she was up to date with missionary developments among the Disciples and probably because she saw herself as a young female missionary.
47 Possibly Prahran. *The Jubilee Pictorial History of the Churches of Christ in Australia* notes "In 1861 the first church building connected to the cause of primitive Christianity was put up by the Prahran church" (p.248).
48 A.T. Saunders writing in the Adelaide *Observer* considers this a mistake and that the ship was the SS *Balclutha.*
49 Robert Richardson was a professor at Bethany College and an associate of Alexander Campbell. The full title of this book was *The Principles and Objects of the Religious Reformation Urged by A. Campbell and Others*, 1852.
50 SEL p. 435.
51 Apparently acquaintances at the Baptist church. Hugh Dixson was a tobacco manufacturer and merchant philanthropist. Another son, Hugh, later Sir Hugh, was a devout Baptist and the benefactor of many charities. The Dixson collection at the Mitchell Library is named after him.
52 Probably landing at Lavender Bay.
53 SEL p.436.
54 North Sydney was a broad geographical description. The actual location was probably in the area north of Naremburn between Willoughby Road and Flat Rock Road.
55 Clarke was a geologist and scientist. He corresponded with Charles Darwin and was a founder of the Royal Society. A large Anglican School in northwestern Sydney is named after Clarke. Its motto is "Christ our Wisdom."
56 A Congregational chapel was built on the original site in the 1870s. This chapel was later converted to the church manse. Renovated during the 1980s the former manse later became known as Pommy Lodge (probably from P.O.M.E. = Persons of Mother England) and was sold in 2015 for around $1.5m] A council heritage plaque identifies the site as being that of the original Bush School.
57 With a different introduction and a few minor word changes Eliza attaches this account to the opening of the school two years earlier. See p.451 of her account. This anomaly might be accounted for by health-related confusion on Davies' part. A version of the same account appears on p.481 in the correct chronological context. In that account Eliza claims there were around 200 guests.
58 Earl married Anna Jane Magarey in 1867.

59 SEL p.525.
60 Elisabeth Magarey, nee Verco, was the sister of James Crabb Verco, an eminent Churches of Christ pioneer.
61 The first Churches of Christ Sunday School in Australia. The Hindmarsh church began meeting there in 1855 but later erected a substantial chapel in Robert Street.
62 *South Australian Chronicle* 2 July 1870.
63 *The Magic of Dawn* Hutchinson, London 1924.
64 Henry Hussey, a South Australian who had been baptized by Alexander Campbell in WV had a casual association with the Hindmarsh church. At this stage he was serving as secretary to Angas and was probably representing him. Hence was "well acquainted with the working of the school."
65 Possibly Alexander Magarey, eldest son of Thomas. It is not clear who W.I (?). Magarey was. Possibly a nephew of Thomas.
66 The Bible Students' Training Class started in 1867. Gore led it for 50 years.
67 SEL p.544.
68 Vol.3. No. 30 May 1874 p.160.
69 Haley, J.J. *Church of Christ in Australasia*, online, p.5.
70 Shannon, Robert A "An Australian in the Land Up Over" in *Christian Standard* 30 July 2000 pp 12 – 14.
71 SEL p.321.
72 *Apostolic Guide*, Cincinnati 6 April 1888 p. 216.
73 Collis was the preacher there for many years and Eliza may also have attended there occasionally.
74 Lester, M.R. "Strong Meat' for a Life of Courage" in *The Disciple*, October 1985 p.18.
75 Refer to his account in the Adelaide *Observer* 7'2/1925p.49 et seq.
76 Beale, Edgar Sturt. *The Chipped Idol* Sydney University Press, 1979 p. 120.
77 Doudy, H A. *Magic of Dawn* Hutchinson & Co, London 1926.
78 This term has dropped from favour over the past fifty years but is broadly defined as those seeking to restore the unity and dynamism of the early church.
79 Private letter, 22 June 1982.

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