

Madame Adele Veilburn (c1813–1858)

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<http://sydney.edu.au/paradisec/australharmony/documentslocal/veilburn>

Between 1840 and 1854, a dancer using the name Madame Adele Veilburn, starred in theatres in the Australian colonies.

Adele Veilburn was the stage name of Jane Williamson née Walker.

Jane Nelson Walker had arrived in Sydney with her widowed mother on the *Red Rover* in 1832. She was probably born in the City of Cork, the daughter of the John Walker Esq and Jane Walker. John Walker was a seaman, possibly a ship's captain. In Jane Williamson's death certificate her father was recorded as 'Walker, officer in the Army.'

The *Red Rover* (Captain RC Chrystie) brought a shipment of free single female immigrants. The *Red Rover* left Cork on 10 April and arrived in Sydney on 10 August. Most of the women were between the ages of 16 and 24. Mrs Jane Walker aged 60 was the oldest woman on the ship. Her son, James Davenport Walker was already in Sydney and another daughter, Mrs Charity Stobo followed in 1833. Mrs Jane Walker died in Sydney in 1835 after a long illness.¹

Jane Nelson Walker married Joseph Shortland Williamson Esq on 29 April 1834 at St James' Church, Sydney.² The witnesses were Thomas Stubbs and Frances Rose McIntosh. In the church wedding records Joseph's age was given as 25 and his occupation as merchant; Jane's age was recorded as 22.

Joseph Williamson was born in New South Wales in 1808, fourth son of the Commissary James Williamson and Jane Shortland, daughter of the first fleet commander, John Shortland RN.

Joseph Williamson was in business as a commercial agent (1834-1837) at 12 York Street. He was already in financial difficulty having been made insolvent in 1832.

Mrs JS Williamson's 'Fashionable and Select Academy for the Instruction of Young Ladies in Dancing and Gymnastics' at 12 York Street (Hutchinson's Buildings), opened on 14 January 1835 'after the Christmas recess.' She was 'the only accomplished female professor of dancing in Sydney' and claimed to have introduced instruction in gymnastics. In 1836 this became 'Mrs J S Williamson's Establishment for the Education of Young Ladies'. The school offered a full range of subjects including reading, writing and arithmetic, geography, plain and ornamental needlework, French, Italian, music, drawing and dancing and took a limited number of boarders.

On Easter Monday, 20 April 1835, Jane Williamson gave a juvenile ball.

The next day, Thomas Stubbs presented a 'Grand Miscellaneous Concert' at the Saloon of the Royal Hotel. This concert of 'Native Minstrelsy' was the first concert given by an Australian. It was under the patronage of the Governor, and the entire musical strength of Sydney lent

¹ *Sydney Gazette* 3 Sep 1835;3. See also Rushen E, McIntyre P. *Fair game: Australia's first immigrant women*. Sydney: Spit Books 2010; 95,104,105,107

² *Sydney Herald*, 5 May 1834;3

their assistance including the band of the 17th Regiment and a Mr Williamson.³ Stubbs's 'management of the concert was quite excellent'; it was described as 'the best musical entertainment ever exhibited in Australia.' Mr Williamson and possibly his brother appeared in concerts in 1834 but their first names are not given in advertisements or reviews.

Jane advertised that her York Street Dancing Academy at 12 York Street would reopen on Saturday 16 January 1836. On 20 July 1836 'Mrs JS Williamson, Professor of Dancing' gave her first Fancy Dress Ball in the Saloon of the Royal Hotel with music by the Band of the 4th (King's Own) Regiment – 'a first attempt of the kind in this rising colony'. "'Masks or dominos" are the order of the night.' Tickets were available from her home at 12 York Street. Jane was the Fairy Queen and her pupils were fairies 'decorated according to the latest fashions from Fairy Land.' There was some concern whether a sufficient number of persons would attend due to inclement weather but by 9.00pm things got moving, with about 90 people present. The *Monitor* suggested that she should open an "Evening Assembly" at her rooms, for practice 'to enable those who wish to attain accuracy in the figures.'⁴

In November 1836, Jane's Academy offered a general English education. 'Mrs W will still continue giving instructions in Dancing.'

On 22 January 1838 she opened her new Ladies' Seminary at 12 Hunter Street, on the corner of Phillip Street. She had 'a Lady, well qualified for and experienced in the Instruction of Youth.' Jane, as usual, gave lessons in Gymnastics and Dancing. The school had a full range of subjects: reading, writing and arithmetic, geography, plain & ornamental needlework, French, Italian, music, drawing and dancing, with a particular specialty being the Irish Jig and the hornpipe.

Lady Gipps attended her Dancing Academy on 5 September 1838 and said she was highly delighted with the proficiency of the young ladies in that graceful (place).

Mrs JS Williamson's Ladies Seminary opened for the 1838 year at 12 Hunter Street. On 30 January 1840, she resumed her Dancing Academy at 3 Park Street.

Jane and Joseph Williamson had a daughter, Olivia Margaret Williamson, born on 25 March 1840.

Madame Veilburn. In 1840, using the name Madame Veilburn, Jane began her stage career. Adoption of the name Veilburn for her stage appearances may have marked the separation from her husband – perhaps she was burning the wedding veil.

Madame Veilburn made her first appearance on the Sydney stage at a benefit for Miss Winstanley on 20 August at the Royal Victoria Theatre; the dance by Madame Veilburn and her two juvenile assistants, was 'one of the greatest treats of the kind we have experienced in Australia. The engagement of Madame Veilburn, if possible, would be a great acquisition to the Victoria.'

She appeared at a benefit for Mrs Arabin on 12 October and on the final night of the season on 22 October in *Le Dieu et la Bayadere*. She was then engaged as a member of the Royal Victoria company – 'a valuable acquisition to the company' – as a substitute for Rachel Lazar who, with her father the theatre manager John Lazar, had gone to Adelaide.⁵

The Royal Victoria reopened on 16 November, after refurbishment, under the proprietorship of Wyatt and the joint management of Conrad Knowles and Thomas Simes. The shows

³ *The Australian* 24 Apr 1835;2

⁴ *Sydney Monitor* 23 Jul 1836;2

⁵ Pask EH. *Enter the Colonies Dancing: A History of Dance in Australia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press 1979

included various plays, specialty dance items, comic songs, blackface songs and clown acts. Veilburn's regular act was an 'Irish jig in character' as an interlude between the main items. She sometimes appeared with some of her pupils. The *Sydney Herald* reviewer commented that 'if actresses will assume names, we wish they would call themselves Thomkins or Smith.'⁶

Veilburn opened a dance academy at the Royal Victoria and 'was inundated by small girls.'

At a benefit for Miss Strickland on 10 June 1841 her item was 'a Comic Song, by our fairy-tripping Danseuse.' On 14 June Veilburn had her Benefit; the program included a 'Grand Ballet of Fairies' ('Les Fées') in which several young ladies, her pupils, appeared in a ballet she had composed. Her niece took part in the program.⁷

The 1840–41 season ended on 3 July. When the theatre reopened on 26 July it was lit by gaslight.

Jane appeared the Royal Victoria Theatre without a break until March 1842 although, towards the end of 1841, the theatre was regularly taken for Dalle Case's circus and for concerts. On 28 September 1841 the Australian Harmonic Society took the Royal Victoria for a benefit to mark the return of Joseph Simmons to the Sydney stage. Simmons and Veilburn were the featured artists.

The dancers, Joseph and Madame Charriere arrived in Sydney on the French vessel *Salazes* on 10 July 1841. Also on board were Luigi Dalle Case and members of his small circus (gymnastic) company. The Charrieres advertised a dance academy on 24 July and were soon working in the theatre.⁸ On 28 August Joseph did a burlesque minuet with Madame Veilburn.⁹ On 10 and 20 January she appeared in benefits for Mrs Thompson and Mrs Groves respectively.

Charriere produced a number of ballets as principal dancer and choreographer until 1842 when he left for Paris.

By 9 December 1841 Jane moved her Dancing Academy to 26 Pitt Street.

JS Williamson was insolvent again in 1841 due to 'the bad state of the times and being unsuccessfully in my business as a commission agent.' His creditors included Thomas Trood for handbills printed for Mrs Williamson.

A lot of Joseph's bills at the Victoria Hotel, which adjoined the theatre, in 1840-41 were for 'liquor and refreshments', during Royal Victoria Theatre performances and were on Veilburn's account.

On 6 December 1841 Jane was called to give evidence in the Insolvent Debtors' Court about distribution of the proceeds of her last benefit at the Theatre. She informed the court that in consequence of the ill-treatment she had received from her husband, she had thrown up her engagement and benefit at the theatre as well as her dancing academy and was now living with a friend. She was not intending again to join her husband. She stated that since the marriage she had to support her husband and her child and he had squandered it all on an extravagant lifestyle of brandy, cigars and billiards. Joseph gave evidence that he had lost the use of his right side and hand which made him unfit for heavy work. Williamson was eventually discharged with advice from the Judge that he should not have any further disputes

⁶ *Sydney Herald* 18 Nov 1840;2. Dr Charles Smith had a very public dispute with Captain Mark Riddle Thomkins and his family in 1833-4.

⁷ *Sydney Herald* 12 Jun 1841 p. 2 and 14 Jun 1841, p. 1

⁸ *Sydney Free Press and Commercial Journal* 13 Jul 1841;2 and 24 Jul 1841;3

⁹ *Australian* 28 Aug 1841;2. *Sydney Free Press* 2 Sep 1841;3

with Mrs. Williamson who had a very great claim on him for her work in supporting the family. Williamson was to treat her with the utmost kindness and respect.¹⁰

Jane refused to support Williamson any longer; she was not living with him and did not plan to live with him again. She had written to him to this effect. The marriage was over.

In February 1842 Dalle Case had offered her an appearance at the Olympic Theatre but she declined because he did not offer the salary she required. Despite her refusal, her name was included in advertisements. When she did not appear, Knowles, manager of the Olympic, made an announcement critical of her. The *Sydney Gazette* defended her: 'We do not wish to defend Madame Veilburn, had she done that which Knowles has represented her to have done, we should have been the first to have held her up to public reprobation, but we do not like to see a reputation stabbed in the dark, merely from the misconception of a foreigner or from some vile behind scene chicanery. Was Mr. Knowles' attack on this lady a gentlemanly action, knowing as he does the whole particulars of the case, or was it manly to attempt to prejudice the audience against her and to advise them not to patronise her benefit?'¹¹

Joseph Chambers, who had been a 'principal dancer at the London Theatres' and arrived from England in early 1842 with his wife and three children, substituted for Veilburn at the Olympic.

During 1842 Signor Carandini moved to Sydney from Hobart and several more dancers arrived from England including Madame Louise and Andrew and Louise Torning. Both Chambers and Carandini had been members of the Royal Italian Opera Company corps de ballet. The Royal Victoria now had a corps of established dancers which included locals who had been trained by Veilburn and Charriere.

Jane does not appear to have performed again in Sydney, apart a benefit for Joseph Charriere on 5 September 1842, during the remainder of the 1841-42 season. She was not a member of the Royal Victoria company for the 1842-43 season.

Wherever Jane advertised her dance classes she announced that she was 'happy to attend Boarding Schools or Private Families.'¹² Chambers established a dancing academy and taught dancing in schools. Carandini's studio was at 158 King Street.

Sydney suffered a major depression in the early 1840s and insolvencies included music and dancing teachers including 'Professors of Dancing William King of Pitt Street (June 1842), Emanuel Charles Green of Castlereagh Street (May 1842) and Joseph Chambers, Dancing Master, of Kent Street (October 1843).

Jane remained in Sydney during 1842. She 'continues to give lessons, in that easy, graceful, and fashionable style of dancing for which she has been so pre-eminent as a Teacher' at her academy for 'the Instruction of Young Ladies in Dancing' at 26 Pitt Street.¹³

In 1843 she went to Tasmania; she probably arrived in Launceston from Sydney on the brig *William* on 9 February 1843 (Mrs Williams and child). On 4 March, as Mademoiselle Adelle, she gave two of her popular dances at the Theatre Royal Olympic, Launceston with the Dalle Case company. Her (two popular) dances were described as 'poetry in motion.'

Between March and August 1844 she was with Mrs Clarke's Royal Victoria Theatre company in Hobart. She made a debut in Hobart on 8 April 1844 with 'Minuet de Coeur' and 'Gavotte de Vestris'. Mr Clarke gave "Madame Adelle" the use of the Royal Victoria Theatre in

¹⁰ *Sydney Herald* Dec 1841;2 also *Sydney Gazette* 7 Dec 1841;2

¹¹ *Sydney Gazette* 12 Mar 1842;2

¹² *Argus* 19 Jun 1846;3

¹³ *Sydney Morning Herald* 16 Aug 1842;3

Campbell Street for her benefit on 6 May in recognition of the 'reception with which her efforts on the Hobart Town Stage have hitherto received'. As well as dancing in a number called the 'Freemasons' Medley Dance' and performing the Irish Jig, she had parts in the dramatic pieces. She lost money on this enterprise.¹⁴

Later in May Adelle, with several of her colleagues, made a brief country tour visiting Richmond, Bagdad, Oatland, Campbell Town etc. 'Of Madame Adelle's dancing, few of our upcountry friends will have seen the like.'

The touring company returned to Hobart in June. Her final performance at the Royal Victoria Theatre was on 30 August; on the next day she sailed for Sydney on the *Marian Watson*.

Mrs Williamson and child arrived in Sydney on 13 September. On 21 September she advertised that she had resumed her dancing lessons in the saloon of the Royal Hotel and would give a Grand Australian Family Ball at the Royal Hotel.

On 21 October Madame Veilburn made her first appearance at the Royal Victoria 'after an absence of several seasons.'

Her 'first ball since her return to the colony', postponed from 16 October due to inclement weather was 'for the numerous families she had the pleasure of instructing' and 'catered more for the second and third classes of society.' The ball opened with her Sylphide Dance. She gave a second ball on 13 November.

In the first week on November, several Sydney papers received a lithograph of 'Madame Adele Veilburn in the Original Irish Jig', No 1 of a series of 'Theatrical Portraits' by E D Barlow, Lithographer & Engraver, of Bridge Street, Sydney.

In promoting the Grand Family Ball for the benefit of Mrs Williamson on 4 December, the *Australian*¹⁵ reported her 'praiseworthy attempts to procure a subsistence'. She had returned 'to the Colony after an absence of two and a half years.' She was 'a teacher of dances, some three or four years back' and numerous people had 'profited by unwearied exertions in the terpsichorean art.' She was accompanied by 'a Young Lady, an Australian, of talent and respectability' and the ball was 'Under the Patronage of several Persons of the highest influence.' At this ball she danced the 'Minuet de la Cour and Gavotte de Vestris.'¹⁶

She gave several more dress balls during 1845 during which she performed her specialty dance pieces. On 15 January, for a 'Grand Fancy Dress Ball', she engaged an 'experienced wardrobe fancy dress tailor' to provide for those without or needed adjustments to their fancy dresses. She advertised 'monthly' balls on 12 February, 9 April and 6 August.

Veilburn appeared at the Royal Victoria regularly from March 1845 until January 1846. She danced in pas des deux and pas des trios with Carandini, Chambers, Madame Louise, the daughters of Gordon Griffiths and Miss Kelk. 'Indeed there is in this lady's dancing an ease and elegance far superior to any other terpsichorean official at the Victoria.'¹⁷

On 10 March, she performed for Mrs Bushelle's benefit (with Master Chambers). She appeared again on 18 March. On 3 April, the last night of the season, she volunteered with Mrs Crane (late Miss M Jones) and Miss E Jones for the benefit of Messrs Fenton and Riley. She was engaged for the winter season which opened on 14 April; she danced with Miss Kelk

¹⁴ *Courier* (Hobart) 3 May 1844;1

¹⁵ *Australian* 28 Nov 1844; 1 and 3

¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 Nov 1844;3

¹⁷ *The Atlas* 11 Oct 1845;547

and Mr Chambers. She was retained for the remainder of the year appearing with Signor Carandini, the Miss Griffiths, Miss Kelk and others.

On 20 November 1845 she had a Joint Benefit with Mr Deering. In December she was announced as a member of the Royal Victoria company.

Veilburn had a wide repertoire of dance forms. She was the leading performer and educator of the 'Irish Jig in Character.'

La Sylphide was a two act ballet by Filippo Taglioni (1832). In 1843, *La Sylphide*, an entirely new dance composed and arranged by Miss Young and Mrs F Howson, was performed by them at the Royal Victoria Theatre in Hobart.¹⁸ In June 1844, Mademoiselle Adelle danced it in the same theatre. Described as the 'Taglioni of the Southern Hemisphere' she performed solos and duets based on *La Sylphide* on many occasions over the next decade.

On 2 April 1846 she left for Melbourne with her child on the *Shamrock*. Joseph Chambers and his family were also on board.

She joined George Coppin at the Queen's Theatre Royal and made her debut in Melbourne on 27 April.¹⁹ 'Madame Veilburn had verve and maturity. She soon had Melbourne at her twinkling feet.'²⁰ She appeared at Coppin's benefit on 18 June partnering Joseph Chambers in *La Polka*.

Both Chambers and Veilburn separately advertised dance classes in Melbourne.

Mr and Mrs Coppin and John Lewis Jacobs left for Adelaide on 20 August 1846 on the *Teazer*. They set about preparing the New Queen's Theatre in Light Square and opened there on 2 November.

[Jacobs had been at RVT Sydney in 1839-2 and she had performed at his benefit on 1 July 1841. They both gave dance items at the benefit for Mrs Thompson on 10 January 1842. Jacobs was with Cameron's company at the Victoria Theatre, Launceston in July 1842.]

Veilburn and Chambers continued on in Melbourne. Veilburn advertised dancing lessons until the end of August. They took part in a benefit for the Relief of the Poor of Ireland at Queen's Theatre Royal on 9 September.

Coppin tried to recruit players for his new theatre and probably sent Jacobs to Melbourne for this purpose. 'Mr Coppin has forwarded instructions from South Australia ... to beat up for recruits for a *corps dramatique* which Mr C is forming in Adelaide.'²¹ Jacobs and some other performers cleared out from Melbourne on the *Teazer* on 7 October and arrived in Adelaide on the 22nd. Veilburn and her child were booked to go with them but she stayed in Melbourne for a further six months.

She appeared with Powell Courtier at the Theatre of Arts in Melbourne when he opened on 17 October 1846.²² A magician and fire-eater, Courtier had arrived from Tasmania in July but his attempt to open a theatre in Melbourne was blocked for several months by the proprietor of the Queen's Theatre Royal. Courtier's theatre was short lived.

On 1 January 1847 Veilburn appeared as the headline act when Queen's Theatre Royal reopened. She did not appear again in advertisements until 19 March. After her performance on Saturday 27 March she and her daughter boarded the schooner *Sister* which was about to

¹⁸ *Courier* (Hobart) 27 Jan 1843;1

¹⁹ *Argus* 31 Apr 1890;4

²⁰ Bagot *op cit*; 112

²¹ *Argus* 2 Oct 1846;2

²² *Argus* 16 Oct 1846;3

leave for Adelaide. A prosecution was brought by the theatre proprietor, John Smith, under the *Servants Act*; she was arrested on a warrant and taken to the watchhouse. The court held she was not a servant and she was discharged in time to rejoin the *Sister* which left on 1 April for Portland and Adelaide.

The *Sister* arrived in Adelaide on 14 April and Veilburn made her first appearance at Coppin's New Queen's Theatre three days later. On the 29th, her daughter, 'Mademoiselle Olivia,' now aged six made her first appearance at New Queen's Theatre in a child's part in 'Peter Bell the Waggoner'.

Veilburn began giving lessons in the most 'fashionable style of dancing.' On 18 May she had her first Assembly Ball (for the winter season) in Adelaide at Joshua's Buildings, Hindley Street. Mr John Lewis Jacobs was master of ceremonies.

By 24 May she had a contract at Coppin's New Queen's Theatre. In June she danced in a pas de deux with Jacobs; in July Morton King performed at the Queen's Theatre with dance solos by Veilburn.

On 29 November, the Royal Adelaide Theatre reopened with 'malcontents from Coppin's.' Jacobs was stage manager. Olivia appeared as a boy in 'Peter Bell the Waggoner' by JB Buckstone. Veilburn gave several dance items with Jacobs.²³ They continued to appear during December (Olivia, 'the Infant Wonder', in medley dances). Veilburn and Jacobs, were advertised as 'the unrivalled dancers,' in January 1848.

Veilburn returned to the New Queen's Theatre in April 1848.

Veilburn was boarding at the Bush Club House Inn. Some theatre people resided there but the boarders were 'principally young women not of the best character.'²⁴ Jane called herself Mrs Penner, wife of Edward Penner.

'Edward Penner partial to hops' was charged with being drunk in Hindley Street in July 1848.

On 22 July Jane and Olivia were witnesses to an assault and robbery in the bar of the Bush Club House Inn. Four men were charged with assault including the brothers James and Henry Carroll.²⁵ James Carroll, the older brother, was a dancing master and violinist.

At the subsequent trial Olivia gave evidence that she had gone to the bar 'to get a pint of ale for her ma's supper.'²⁶

Jane said she 'was really married to Mr Edward Penner ... but she did not live with Mr Penner.' She did not live with Mr Carroll (the prisoner) nor did she 'receive him when he came.'²⁷

Alexander Malcolm, the complainant in the assault case, said he did not know Madame Veilburn. 'Here the veteran figurante came forward. She cast a glance of tender anxiety on the elder Carroll, and as Mr Malcolm had not the honour of her acquaintance, she was permitted to retire. She curtsied most artistically and withdrew'²⁸

On 21 August 1848 she gave a Grand Masquerade Ball at the Adelaide Theatre 'previous to her departure from the colony.'

²³ *SA Register* 1 Dec 1847;2 and 15 Jan 1848;2.

²⁴ *SA Register* 4 Nov 1848;3

²⁵ *SA Register* 9 Aug 1843;3, 10 Aug 1848;3 and 12 Aug 1848;3

²⁶ *SA Register* 10 Aug 1848;3

²⁷ *SA Register* 16 Sep 1848;3

²⁸ *SA Register* 9 Aug 1848;3

On 15 October she gave a Grand Masque Ball at the Adelaide Theatre, a joint benefit for her daughter. It was the last masque ball for the season and was to be followed by the reopening of the house as a theatre.

Jane Penner, described as the 'mistress of the mysteries of the Adelaide Theatre', had sworn a complaint against James Carroll. This complaint to the Police Court on 28 October 1848 had led to Carroll's apprehension and a charge of felonious assault. She subsequently admitted to the magistrate that the information in her complaint was false. The magistrate was very angry and reprimanded her for wasting police time with her 'drunken and disreputable quarrels'. He said that it was up to Carroll to take appropriate action against her if he wished to do so. After he was discharged, 'the prisoner glanced at Madame significantly, bowed to the Court expressively, and disappeared rapidly.'²⁹

Veilburn and Olivia were performing at New Queens Theatre in December and from January to May 1849. On 28 May Veilburn was absent due to illness.

On 7 February 1850 Jacobs opened the Dramatic Hall in Leigh Street, Adelaide, as a vaudeville theatre. Veilburn appeared once. Members of the Dramatic Hall company tried to discredit the New Queen's Theatre but lost the subsequent libel case and Jacobs was prosecuted for perjury. The owner of the Dramatic Hall closed it down.³⁰

Veilburn had a Benefit Ball for herself and child on 2 September 1850 at the Clarendon Hotel, Hindley Street, 'after the style of those at the Royal Hotel, Sydney' and intended forming a Quadrille Party once or twice a week. She 'trusts that the past will be forgiven and the present only thought of in her endeavours to please.'³¹

Morton King and Charles Young and their wives had come direct from Hobart to Melbourne in early September to take the lease of Queen's Theatre. Veilburn arrived from Adelaide soon after and was with them when their season opened on 21 October [the first advertisement in *The Argus* including her name was on 17 October].

She appeared in dance interludes regularly during this season including Christmas week, on New Year's Night and in early January. On 10 January she did a wreath and shawl dance at a select night under the patronage of the Free Masons at Queen's Theatre. On 13 January she danced 'the Spanish Bolero; this was probably her final appearance before she left the company. (When the show on 15 January was advertised on the 14th, Veilburn was included but her name was dropped from the advertisement on the 15th. It is not apparent whether she left or was dropped.

'Madame Vielburn' (*sic*) made her first appearance before a Geelong audience on 22 January 1851 at the Theatre Royal. She danced The Sylphide and the Irish Jig.

On 28 January, she held a Grand Dress Ball at the Royal Hotel at which she danced her court dances. Thirty couples were present. 'We believe Madame V shines more in the ballroom than she does on stage ... although on the latter arena she fascinates all beholders. ... Her Irish Jig was rapturously and most deservedly encored.'³²

It was announced in the media that Miss Dalzell and Mme Veilburn were 'two important acquisitions for our theatre' and she allegedly entered into a long engagement with Elmes and Lee. However she only made three appearances under this management. The second was at the Theatre Royal on 29 January, introducing as an interlude the Scarf Dance and the Irish

²⁹ *SA Register* 1 Nov 1848;3

³⁰ Parsons p 25, *Register* 4 Mar 1850;2-3

³¹ *Register* 30 August 1850;2

³² *Geelong Advertiser* 27 Jan 1851;2

Jig. Her next appearance was not until 24 February when she substituted for Mr Clarkson, 'the boneless man,' who had failed to arrive.

Her next appearance was in a Tradesman's Fancy Ball at Mr Lock's Retreat Hotel in South Geelong on 25 March. She was scheduled to have a Quadrille Party on one evening during the week during the winter season commencing on 31 March and to appear for one night at the Britannia Hotel, Yarra Street. She was available for boarding schools or families for private tuition in the most fashionable style of dancing for which she has been so celebrated for years by the aristocracy.

Veilburn was next mentioned in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 12 July. Apparently, after a lengthy period without work in the theatre, members of the profession responded to her appeal for a benefit. As Deering refused to allow use of the Theatre Royal unless he was paid before the selection of the pieces, it was her intention to apply to Mr and Mrs Young of Melbourne, for a benefit 'trusting that their heart will be open to the appeal of humanity.'

(The usual practice was to pay expenses from the proceeds of the benefit and she accused Deering of having no consideration of her financial situation – she was almost bankrupt. He imposed impossible conditions.)

Deering engaged her for the ensuing season. He would not allow her to use the name Madame Veilburn which she had used under the management of JHS Lee & H Elmes and was using in the community. Using the name Madame Adelaide she appeared uninterrupted at the Theatre Royal from 13 August until 22 September. On the 13 September there was a grand vocal and instrumental concert and musical melange (including Madame Adelaide) to commemorate the first Victorian election.

On the 19 September she had a benefit. Mr and Mrs Stubbs offered their services. It was also the first appearance there of her daughter as Madame Olivia. The program included Rob Roy McGregor and the farce Blue Jackets. In between the pieces was a pas de deux by Madame Adelaide and Madame Olivia.

Madame Adelaide appeared once more (according to adverts) on 20 October in a benefit for Mrs Deering under the patronage of the Geelong Gold Diggers.

On 30 May 1852, Coppin arrived in Melbourne from Adelaide. He took over the lease of the Geelong Theatre Royal and reopened it on 14 June. The season ran until 20 December. SW Wallace, brother of Vincent Wallace, was leader of the band. The programs of pantomime-type material, dramas, comedies and farces included Coppin, Mrs Stubbs and Mr Meadows. A Grand Concert was given on Saturday nights. Jane and Olivia performed with the company during the season as 'Madame Veilburne' and 'Miss Veilburne' usually in specialty dance solos and duets. Jacobs and the Veilburnes appear in advertisements for the Theatre from 28 June

On 28 June, for example, Madame Veilburne played Princess Plumante in the extravaganza *Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London*. Jacobs also appeared. On 5 and 8 July, the Veilburnes had parts in the mythological burlesque burletta *Cupid*. Olivia was Venus. On 6 July, Veilburne was Baroness Whitlington and Olivia was Clutterbuck in the comedy *Masquerading*.

On 12 July, they played two of the 'Immortal Celestials' in the melodrama *Forty Thieves; or, The Fairy of the Lake*; Veilburne was the Fairy of the Lake, Protectress of Ali Baba; Olivia was Gossamer. A new ballet divertissement 'Squatters and Gold Diggers; or, Which is my Choice?' followed; Olivia was the 'Fairy of the magic wand' and Adele was 'Susan, the fair maid of Victoria'.

They had roles in the farces 'Mischief Making', 'Doctor's Boy', 'Cherry Bounce', and 'Man with the Carpet Bag.'

On 20 July, after a repeat of 'Squatters and Gold Diggers', Olivia that did a 'Sylphide Pas Seul' followed by 'The Nugget Pas De Deux' and a double hornpipe (Veilburne and Mrs Stubbs) and a solo by Veilburne.

They were both in the original romantic fairy morality *The Spirit of the Gold Fields; or, Avarice, Intemperance and Rum*. Olivia was a little woodcutter and mother Drunkina, the spirit of rum.

On 29 July and 3 and 12 August, Olivia was Janet in *Lady of Lyons; or, Love and Pride* and Ann, one of Bradford's children, in *Jonathan Bradford*, then Sal Hammond in *Eugene Aram* and *The Curse of Mammon* (Veilburne was Mary Somerton and Lady Fox Glove and Olivia was Jupiter. In the 'Vampire Bride' (Veilburne was Swanhilda); this was repeated on 17 and 18 August.

On 19 and 20 August, the Veilburnes were in the sporting comedy *Meltonians* (Olivia as Sampson and Veilburne as Betsey). On the 23rd, Olivia was Nelly in *Presumptive Evidence; or, Card Drawing* and on 23rd and 24th, later repeated, Veilburne was the Marchioness in *Don Caesar de Bazan; or, Maritana the Gipsy*.

The Veilburnes continued to get parts including in *Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene; or, the Spectre Bride*, the nautical drama *The Sea; or, the Ocean Child*; the gipsy story *The Flowers of the Forest*. Veilburne, Meadows and Mrs Stubbs were in a comic ballet on 19 October and in *Grace Huntley* on the 20th.

Mme Veilburne had parts in the farce *Blue Jackets* and the ballet *Guy Fawkes; or, the Gunpowder Plot* Olivia performed in *Clari; or, the Maid of Milan*.

The Nelson Family commenced a five night season on 13 November; the company included the Veilburnes. Mrs Stubbs held her benefit on 13 December; Meadows, Jacobs and Veilburne offered their services. Veilburne danced La Sylphide. The Nelson Family had its last night on 18 December.

Coppin continued in Geelong in 1853 but there is no evidence that Jane or Olivia appeared after his benefit on 20 December.

They were presumably still living in Geelong. At about 7.30pm on Saturday, 8 October 1853, when Olivia was proceeding from home, a man came up to her near Bellerine Street and snatched her small silk bag or reticule which contained £2.9.2. She chased the man to near Market Square screaming where he was caught by a passer-by. The prisoner, James Lane, stated he was hard up. On 26 October at Geelong Circuit Court Lane was sentenced to '3 years hard labour on the roads of the colony.'³³

Jane and Olivia arrived in Newcastle on the *Raven* on the 10 January 1854. Jane had a short season at John Malcom's Royal Australian Amphitheatre in Sydney in January and February including a benefit for Malcom on 13 February. Her last appearance was probably on 20 February.

On 19 June 1854 Madame Veilburne, the celebrated Danseuse, from the Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart Town, and Geelong Theatres made her first appearance in Bathurst at the Benefit for Mr Belfield, manager of the Royal Victoria Theatre, Bathurst).³⁴

³³ *Geelong Advertiser* 12 and 28 Oct 1853

³⁴ *Bathurst Free Press* 17 Jun 1854, p. 3

On 1 July Mrs JS Williamson advertised that she had opened a dancing academy in Bathurst for the instruction of young ladies and gentlemen, and intended to hold a Quadrille Party every Tuesday evening.³⁵

On 8 May 1855 Coppin and GV Brooke and their company arrived in Sydney from Melbourne on the *City of Sydney*. They opened at the Royal Victoria Theatre on 10 May. 'Miss Veilburn' appeared, apparently only on one occasion, on 11 June with a *pas fantastique* between acts. Coppin and Brooke returned to Melbourne on 14 July.

'Jane Adele Williamson' (Madame Adele Veilburn) died at George Street South, Sydney on 13 May 1858. The registered cause of death was "disease of the heart" of three weeks duration. She was buried in Camperdown Cemetery. At the time of the death, Olivia's address was Jamison Street, Sydney.

Olivia married John Lee, a grazier in the Bathurst area, in 1862. She had 7 children in Bathurst between 1862 and 1873 two of whom died under the age of 5. Lee died in Bathurst on 12 Jan 1875. The family moved to Sydney where Olivia died (at 20 Wilton Street) towards the end of 1913.

Don and Ian Wilkey
24 April 2016

³⁵ *Bathurst Free Press* 1 Jul 1854;4