

## Elizabeth (Lizzie) Oliver Knight Scudder

### Biography

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Elizabeth was born 15 September 1830 in Boston, Massachusetts<sup>1</sup>, her family having recently relocated there from Falmouth, Maine.

She was the daughter of Franklin Lafayette Knight and Ruth Whitney Johnson<sup>2</sup>. She joined her four siblings (whose ages then ranged from 6 to 2): Franklin Jr., Juana, Louville and Mary. The eldest boy, Franklin, would become a Classicist and an Episcopal priest, the second boy, Augustus Louville, would become a medical doctor. Both daughters, Juana and Mary, would go into missionary work in China with their husbands. Lizzie would follow them in that service but would serve, with her husband, in India.

As the youngest of the 5 children (the baby of the family), she was doted on, but was forced to deal with the vagaries of life when her mother passed in 1832 in New York (to which the family had, once again, relocated). Her Aunt Martha Knight (her father's sister) came to New York when Lizzie's mother passed and took all 5 of the children, whose ages then ranged from 2 to 8 years old, to Franklin Sr.'s parents in Falmouth, Maine. Deacon Oliver & Daraxa Merrill Knight, the children's grandparents, would provide a home for them until their own deaths. The children, including the girls, had the opportunity there to be exposed to intellectual pursuits. The boys were enrolled at Andover and the girls continued to study at home. All were academically accomplished. The daughters became forward thinking women who chose a career and married men with whom they could share it.

The oldest boy, Franklin, graduated from Bowdoin College, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1846<sup>3</sup>. He was, as a Classicist, fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and was determined on a career in education, to which end he accepted a position at the Brookeville Academy in Maryland. While there, he met his future wife, Lavinia Howard Dorsey, whom he married in 1851, and also decided on a career change, studying for the Episcopal priesthood. He was ordained a Deacon in 1853 and a Priest in 1854 and assigned to a parish in



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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Juana Knight McCartee, dated Sept. 10, 1915, to her nephew, M. D. Knight, gives the place of birth and full name.

<sup>2</sup> Summary (with sources): <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/G6ZY-ZVH>

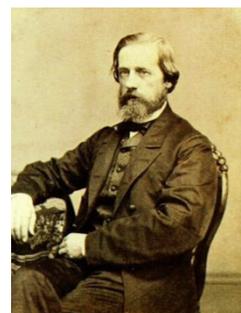
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.myheritage.com/research/record-90100-462444136/theta-of-delta-kappa-epsilon-the-story-of-sixty-years?indId=individual-1305807732-1500043&s=1305807732>

Kent County, Maryland. In 1857 he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity from Washington College in Maryland.



The eldest daughter, Juana, would become the first single woman to be posted to China as a missionary<sup>4</sup>. While there she met and married her husband, Dr. Divie Bethune McCartee<sup>5</sup>, who organized the first Protestant church in China and with whom she would adopt the daughter, Kin Yamei<sup>6</sup>, of Chinese family friends who passed. That daughter would be educated by them in the United States, become a medical doctor, and then return to China as the first U.S. educated Chinese doctor there. Dr. McCartee would also serve as a diplomat for the U.S. in both China and Japan and author several books on diverse topics.

The second son, Augustus Louville (known as Lou or A.L.) would study medicine in Virginia and then relocate to Missouri, where he would marry and raise his family. In addition to his medical practice, he would serve as a leader in his community and in his church.



The second daughter, Mary Greenleaf, would marry Rev. Henry Rankin<sup>7</sup> (the service being performed by her cousin [erroneously reported as her uncle] the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Greenleaf} and, after his death, Rev. Robert Aikman<sup>8</sup>. There were children by both marriages. Rev. Rankin served as missionary in China, and it was this that enabled Juana to be posted there with them. Rev. Aikman served at a church in New Jersey and would author a history of Morristown. Her daughter, Susan Rankin, would marry Caesar Augustus Rodney Janvier and serve as a missionary to India<sup>9</sup>.

When her sisters were at their home base of New Jersey, Lizzie would visit. It was there that she became interested in missionary work for which she would train in Boston. In one of those two places she met the widowed Rev. William Scudder, whom she would marry 29 September 1852<sup>10</sup> in Newark, New

<sup>4</sup> <https://archive.org/details/jubileepapers0000unse/page/14/mode/2up> p. 15

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divie\\_Bethune\\_McCartee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divie_Bethune_McCartee)

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kin\\_Yamei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kin_Yamei)

<sup>7</sup> <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924023224870&seq=11>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.myheritage.com/research/record-90100-427038692/obituary-record-of-the-graduates-of-the-undergraduate-schools-deceased?indId=individual-1305807732-1500747&s=1305807732#fullscreen>

<sup>9</sup> <https://history.pcusa.org/collections/research-tools/guides-archival-collections/rg-190>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939Z-1C9B-TB?i=459&cc=1803976>

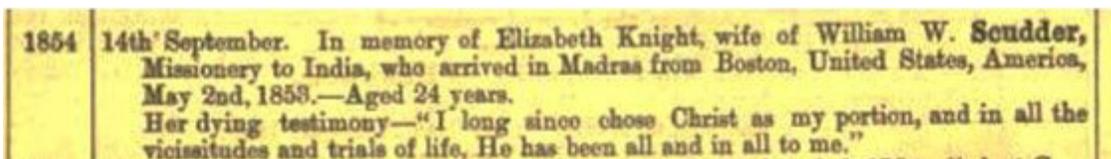
Jersey. As the Scudder family was very active in missionary work in India, she went there with him. This was a joining of two families committed to lives of service to others.

While in Arcot, India, on 20 August 1853, she gave birth to a daughter, Lillie, who would also lose her mother early and she herself would die in 1857, at about age 4, and be interred at Knollcombes Baptist Chapel Cemetery in Jamestown, Saint Helena Island<sup>11</sup>.

Lizzie passed away from malaria on 14 September 1854 in India at which time she was just shy of 24 years old and her daughter was only a year old. The death announcement<sup>12</sup> includes the observation that she "was peculiarly adapted to the important work upon which she had entered." She is interred at the Free Church of Scotland Mission Chapel<sup>13</sup> at Royapuram, Madras, India.

Her sister Juana's letter to their father describes the heartbreak experienced by the entire family at the loss of its youngest member<sup>14</sup>. Juana and Mary were stationed near each other in China and Juana's letter expresses her gratitude that they could share their grief and the hope that William would be consoled by having their daughter Lillie.

One can only imagine what Lizzie could have accomplished had her life been longer.



*Lizzie's memorial in the Free Church of Scotland Mission Chapel<sup>15</sup>.*

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/215607797/elizabeth-knight-scudder>

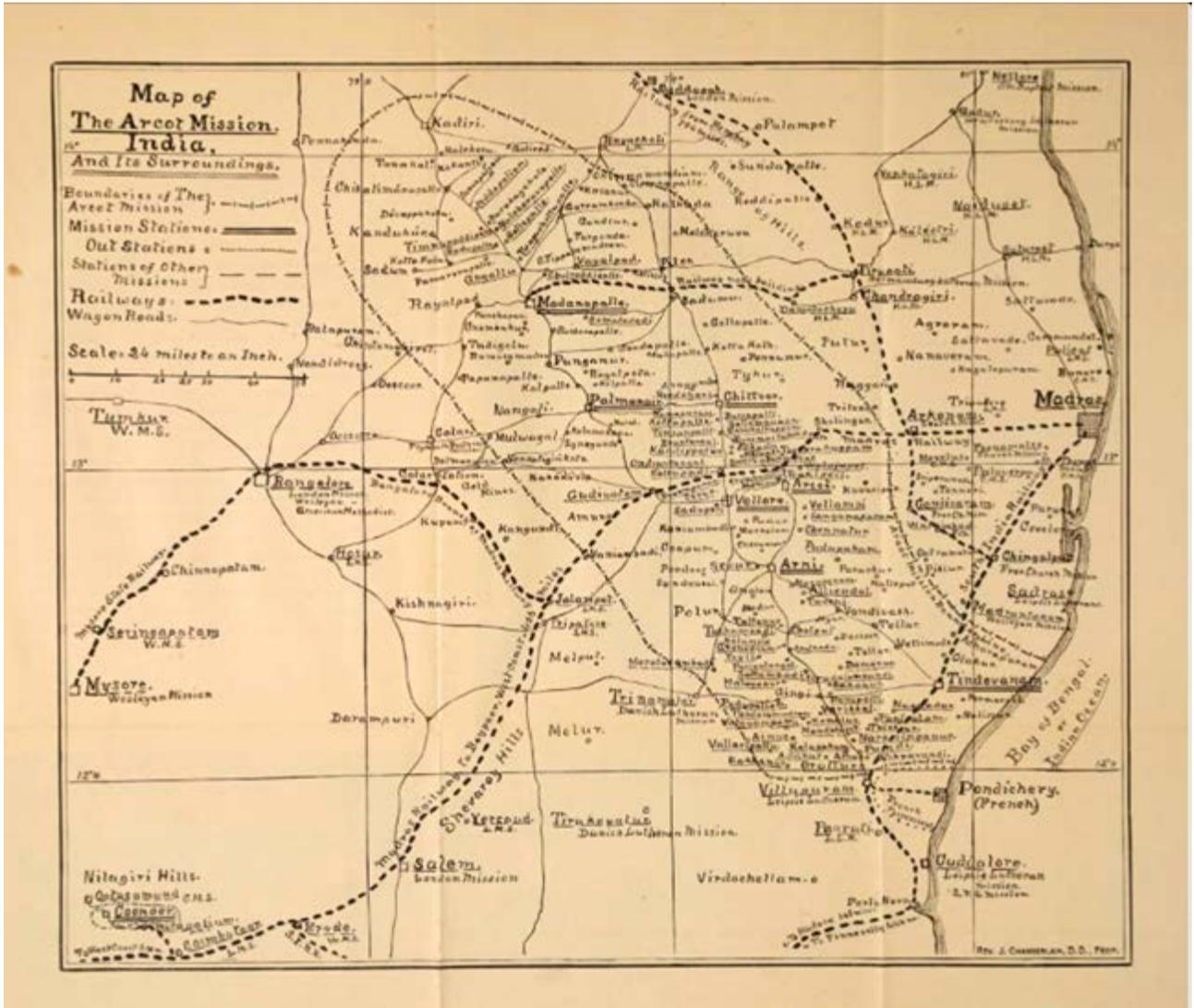
<sup>12</sup> Boston Transcript, 22 December 1854, found at: [https://www.oldnews.com/en/record?record\\_id=record-10969-2548877736-&referred=mh\\_record\\_page&ocr\\_panel=1](https://www.oldnews.com/en/record?record_id=record-10969-2548877736-&referred=mh_record_page&ocr_panel=1).

<sup>13</sup> "List of tombs and monuments of Europeans, and co. in the Madras district" by Indian Department of Archaeology, published 1898. Page 62. Found at: <https://archive.org/details/in.gov.ignca.22728/page/n63/mode/2up>

<sup>14</sup> Letter dated Dec. 1854 found at <https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A143457#page/17/mode/1up>

<sup>15</sup> See note 13 *supra*.

MAP OF THE ARCOT MISSION



<sup>16</sup> J. H. Wyckoff, *Sketch of the Arcot Mission, India*, (1886), 3.