

Chapter 1: Finding Abby again

I have written, in "Matthew Franklin Whittier in his own words," of how I discovered my soul mate, Abby, as the first wife of my earlier incarnation as Matthew, and I briefly alluded to her help in preparing that manuscript. But there is much more to tell, and I decided to save it for a second book. Now, I will tell the story of how our romance rekindled, and how we have been able to re-establish our marriage across time and so-called death.

Like many people, I have always been looking for "someone." I didn't know her name, or how I knew her. I knew that I had been grieving her loss since childhood. At age 1-1/2, I was given a stuffed panda bear which played "Brahms' Lullaby." But whenever the music box starting playing, I invariably began crying, so my parents finally cut the box out and sewed it back up! But I vividly remember what I was experiencing. It was a crushing, adult grief. Overwhelming despair and loss, as though my heart was coming out of my chest.

Now, the researcher in me had to pursue this clue, and as it turns out, Brahms wrote that lullaby many years after Abby Poyen died in 1841. But I did find references which stated that the tune itself existed, prior to Brahms borrowing it, as an Austrian folk tune. Abby's father was a wealthy Frenchman from the West Indies, and I have the impression that he entertained visitors from Europe on a regular basis. Whether or not Abby could have learned that tune in the early 19th century as she was growing up, I have no way of knowing.

But that's enough of research. "Matthew Franklin Whittier in his own words" was written in scholarly fashion, to try to establish, through historical research, that the case is genuine. Whether I succeeded or not I will leave to the reader and to posterity. In this sequel, I am writing from the heart, from my *subjective* reality. So my subjective reality as a child was that I felt crushing, overwhelming grief when that song was played. *Something* was being stirred deep, deep down. And then all my life I *knew*, somehow, that I had had a soul mate, and that I missed her terribly and was still grieving for her.

When I was a little boy, I was lying in the back seat of my parents' car, as they were driving through Miami Beach, Florida at night. I remember gazing up at the neon signs of the various hotels, and I was fantasizing about being with my soul mate. I didn't think in those terms, of course. I simply felt I couldn't stand being apart from her any longer, and so to relieve that pain in my heart, I imagined being with her. I had not felt the slightest sexual urges at that age--it was pure longing of one heart for another. But I wasn't picturing her--I had no idea what she looked like. I just knew I missed her terribly.

When I did start to get interested in girls, beginning in sixth grade, I would develop strong crushes. Most fit a particular "look." They were brunettes, and in hindsight, I will say that most of them looked vaguely like Abby. Again, something deep inside me was getting triggered, and I was reacting unconsciously as though these girls were Abby. I was also expecting them to react as she would, and they didn't. So these crushes were all unrequited, and extremely painful. Fortunately, I had enough character and presence of mind not to "stalk" or do anything inappropriate as I was being spurned by these girls. This pattern continued on into adulthood. One young woman exclaimed, "You are in love with love." Others accused me of being "co-dependent." I had no idea what was wrong with me. No explanation, no self-help book seemed to

be quite on-target. Okay, I was trying to match these girls to an "imago"--but *where* was this imago coming from? I explored every theory, remained baffled, and the pattern continued.

Fast-forward to 2010. I had been researching my past life as Matthew Franklin Whittier, and I had also been engaging in a focused attempt to find my soul mate through online dating services. I reasoned that if she existed anywhere in the world, we should be able to find each other this way. Through one of these websites, I met a woman who coincidentally lived in the area where Matthew had grown up. It wasn't a romantic connection, I felt, but we seemed to have a rapport, and though she was skeptical she listened to my story. She remained skeptical throughout, but she helped me research my past-life case for some two years as a volunteer. In some ways, her skepticism made the case stronger.

She was also instrumental in bringing me and Abby together. We had been searching for old letters, and one day she found and sent me a letter written by Abby, herself. I noticed immediately that Abby signed her name with the "y," as I felt she had. But when I began reading the letter, I felt like crying. Do you know how you feel you could cry, but it's blocked somehow? I felt, inside, something like, "I've missed you *so much*..." And then the feeling passed.

Now, I have to back up a bit. Some months previously, I had been asked by a friend, who is a psychotherapist, to compose background music for her new self-help CD. I had been playing around with Garage Band software on my Mac, and was surprising myself. My fledgling efforts (and my willingness to work cheap) impressed her, so I was to create a sampler with several possible music "beds," and she would pick from it.

Trouble was, she didn't like any of them! Of course, she wanted something subtle that wouldn't interfere with the voice or call too much attention to itself, and I was trying to compose real music. We worked that out in the end. But meanwhile, in and amongst the various "spacey" tunes I had composed was a lilting, sad little piece that sounded vaguely French. It had just spontaneously come out of me. It was rather a bit more sophisticated than my other samples, but at the same time, a simple, haunting melody. My friend said, "I want *that* one, but just slow it way down and simplify it."

Well, I suddenly got quite defensive! My emotions flared up and I blurted out, "This is a message from my soul mate on the other side. You can't use it!!"

I had *no idea* where that came from, and I forgot it. But I didn't let her use the sample, either.



Chapter 2: First contact

Back to March of 2010, I had read the historical letter penned by Abby, in haste, to Matthew's sister Elizabeth, and had felt like crying, but couldn't. She and Matthew had just been married two months previous to the writing of that letter. As I read it, they were, apparently, being prevented from seeing each other while Matthew was temporarily staying in the new Whittier family home at Amesbury, because Matthew had married a non-Quaker and the family feared Quaker disapproval. He was sick (probably from exhaustion, as he attempted to help his mother and sister move, and also launch a business partnership at the same time), and she desperately wanted to come to his aid, but was prevented "by fate" as she put it. They would move to nearby Dover the following month.

In this letter, Abby conveyed her love, her concern, and her longing to be with Matthew. She humorously called him a "privileged child," inasmuch as Elizabeth could show him the letter (which she was hoping she would, of course). I think it was an inside joke, too, because Abby, unlike Matthew, came from a wealthy, prominent family, and I think Matthew had called *her* a "privileged child." So now that they were married, *he* was a privileged child, too--and not just with correspondence! Such are the little love-stories that I seem to remember with my heart.

But all these impressions were slowly dawning on me, rising to the surface like so many bubbles, after first reading the letter. Something was awakening in my heart--some ancient key was turning, bit-by-bit, in a rusty lock. A few days later, I was working alone, listening to a song of Hafiz poetry set to music by Jamie Newell, when my heart burst open. I suddenly began sobbing, sobbing for Abby, as though she had died only yesterday. Everything I had felt as a infant upon hearing Brahms' Lullaby--all the sadness in Abby's tune--all my longing as a child lying in the back seat of my parents' car--everything came pouring out! And after *that* subsided, I knew she was trying to reach me, and that I *must* find some way to reach back to her.

Now, this was 2010. Twelve years earlier, while researching my documentary on reincarnation, "In Another Life," I had videotaped a psychic reading of reincarnation subject Jeff Keene by Candace Zellner at the Phoenix and Dragon Bookstore in Atlanta, Georgia. Candace had proved herself genuine in that reading, and I thought of her immediately. Would she read me over the phone, and try to connect me with Abby? Could she establish a "three-way call"?

I wrote to her, telling her as few details as possible so as not to prejudice her results, and got a surprising reply. Candace said that I had an "attached spirit," and that looking at me psychically was like looking into a fun-house mirror. She refused to read me!

I then explained that I had been researching a past life in the 19th century, and had connected with my soul mate from that lifetime who is still on the other side, and that I would like to contact her. Candace said, yes, that was exactly what it was she was "seeing," and she agreed to do the reading after all. I then sent her an image of Matthew, and one page of Abby's letter. She received the image of Matthew, but not the letter (in subsequent correspondence she had quite a bit of difficulty receiving attachments from me). So the reading was set up for March 10, 2010. I made her promise not to read anything on my website, and she agreed. So when the reading commenced, she knew almost nothing about these historical figures.

At the appointed time on the 10th, at 2:00 pm, Candace called. She said she had almost called to

start an hour early, because for the last hour she was being flooded with images. Abby was, apparently, that eager to talk to me! She said that I had loved Abby dearly, and that I could have no idea how much she loved me. Then, looking at the image of Matthew, she began as follows. Quoting now from my notes taken during the reading: "Nobility, stature, status. Wife not right religion, family against. Loved her dearly. Family or families feuded, rejected him. 'You can come but she can't'--because of religion or status. I could be Matthew--confirmed, she's certain."

All of this was correct except the first statement, if taken to mean that Matthew had nobility and worldly status. It was actually Abby who was descended from French nobility and came from a wealthy family of status. Matthew's portrait certainly suggests nobility of character, and it may have been literally correct for him for an earlier lifetime. Candace does tend to skip around incarnations in her readings.

In any case, from my research into the history, it appears to me that neither family approved of the marriage. We know for certain that Matthew was "disowned" by the Quakers for having married her. It appears, as said, that the young couple wasn't even allowed to visit together under the Whittier roof. I can well imagine, meanwhile, that Abby's parents--or her father, at least, as I recall it--was none-too-pleased at the prospect of their daughter, who had been carefully raised for marriage to a wealthy family, marrying a poor Quaker farm boy, instead!

So Candace was right-on, in her very first statements, and she continued to make "hits." She said Abby was asking about the "five children." I kept on correcting her, that Matthew and Abby only had two children, and she kept mentioning it. I said to myself, "Well, it's okay, I don't expect psychics to be 100% accurate." Then it struck me. Matthew remarried and had three additional children during his lifetime, making a total of five. Abby was asking about all of them, not just hers.

As I just let Candace continue on her own, without any prompting from me, she gave the following description.

She was hearing "36." Matthew and Abby married on August 4, 1836.

Abby and Matthew had read "black market metaphysical books" to each other on picnics. Later I learned that Matthew had preached Spiritualist sermons in his late 40's.

Abby died of a plague, like tuberculosis. The history isn't clear, but it appears she died at her family home, two weeks after their eight-month old daughter Sarah. Matthew and Abby lived near the docks in Portland, Maine, where plagues did come in. So it's a likely scenario.

After Abby's death, Matthew became eccentric and withdrawn. An account of a personal meeting with Matthew late in life describes him as taciturn and preferring to be alone, despite his being known as a humorist.

Matthew, Candace said, lived on the East Coast--perhaps New York, Washington or Virginia. He actually lived in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

While courting, Matthew sat on a swing with Abby overlooking a river. Abby lived very near the Merrimac River, and Matthew later described, in his humorous sketches, young couples "sitting up" together, and also couples sitting together in swings.

After my emotional floodgates opened, and before the reading, I had been experiencing Abby's presence, which seemed to wax and wane. Some days it would be gone altogether. I wrote in my diary that I wondered whether she had changed her mind, or was leaving me. Candace said no, that it was simply due to "earth conditions."

Now, before the reading, I had told Abby that I was prepared to make a very real commitment to her, but that naturally I had to have proof that this was real, first. I don't know whether I really expected to get such proof, but I was quite sincere about it. I knew what it meant. It meant the search for my soul mate was over. It meant that the reason I couldn't find her anywhere on earth, was because she *wasn't on earth at all!* She was in the astral realm, waiting for me--waiting for me to be mature enough to join her again, and hoping I would wish to do so.

It also meant that I would be committing to never having a physical relationship again, the rest of my life. If I had, in fact, found my soul mate, I was quite prepared to make that promise.

So this reading provided enough objective proof that I had to admit Candace had come through for me. This was real. Logically, objectively, if I was to be honest about it, this was real. Abby was really there, she really loved me. Clearly, I loved her. So it was a go!

