

Collection: Anna (Jones) PRITCHARD Diary
1849-1857, [1858-1880]
Warren County

Physical Description: Xerographic copy of typescript of lost original diary, 117 pages; copy of typescript of will of Mrs. Pritchard dated 1908 with 1909 codicil.

Acquisition: Gift of Mr. Thomas S. Harrington, Eden, N.C., April 1, 1996.

North Carolina State Archives
Raleigh, North Carolina

Description: Anna (Jones) Pritchard (Dec. 27, 1829 - July 14, 1914) was the eighth child of William Green Jones (1791-1845) and his wife Mary Christmas Johnston (1795-1861). In 1846 she married, over family protest, Dr. Robert Christian Pritchard (Dec. 25, 1812 - July 17, 1870), and had by him ten children born between 1848 and 1868, one of whom was stillborn, one of whom lived but two months, and the last of whom died at the age of two years. Dr. and Mrs. Pritchard built their house, "Buena Vista", in southwestern Warren County in 1848 and lived there until 1856 when they moved to Warrenton for the sake of the doctor's practice. After Dr. Pritchard suffered a paralytic stroke in 1858, they moved to the country again, first to the old Hawtree farm at the end of 1858; and back to "Buena Vista" at the beginning of 1863. Here Anna (Jones) Pritchard remained until her death fifty years later.

It is unclear whether Mrs. Pritchard's diary was originally contained in a single volume divided into two parts, or whether the typescript was prepared from two separate manuscripts. As the typescript of the text now stands, the first 22 pages contain a single introductory essay composed in June, 1852. This passage gives an account of her grandmother (Sarah Green Johnston), her mother (Mary Christmas Johnston Jones), several of her brothers and sisters, herself, her marriage to Dr. Pritchard, her wedding trip to Norfolk, Baltimore, and Washington, and their setting up house-keeping in 1848. Pages 22 through 88 contain an essentially contemporaneous record of events in Mrs. Pritchard's life from August 3, 1852, to November 3, 1857. Pages 89 and 90 record their removal from Warrenton to Hawtree farm (Dec. 25, 1858) and their subsequent removal back to Buena Vista (Jan. 21, 1863). Pages 90, 91, and 92 contain entries relating to the birth and death of a son and a stillborn daughter. Mrs. Pritchard's "Sunday Journal" runs from page 92 through page 113 and describes church services she attended, as well as some secular events, for the following periods: June 3 - August 12, 1849; January 17 - July 18, 1852; and January 27 and February 8, 1861.

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Several pages in the diary record Mrs. Pritchard's reaction to books and periodicals she read: p.26-30 (essentially repeated on p.103-105); p.45-49; p.51; and p.65-67. Her reading included eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sermons, devotional books, novels, poetry, "sunday school books", and a smattering of biography and history. Her moral judgment of some of the books and poetry she read is fairly strongly expressed.

Her opinions are as strongly expressed, too, on other subjects, whether she is commenting on Catholic liturgy, the conduct of her servants, or the character of her cousins. She never expresses an opinion of Dr. Pritchard except in the most oblique fashion, though, over and over, it will seem to the reader a wonder that the regimen he prescribed for her and their ailing children did not carry them into the next world. Several extended entries in the diary describe the illnesses of her children and the medical treatments practiced on them when suffering from whooping cough, pneumonia, and typhoid fever, or when she was suffering after-effects of one of her deliveries. Mrs. Pritchard doesn't go so far as to pray for the doctor's defeat when he stands for election to the General Assembly in 1854, but she makes it clear that she hopes it is God's will that he be defeated.

Mrs. Pritchard is careful to record in her diary the amount of money she made by her own efforts, chiefly through the sales of eggs, butter, and poultry, during the years from 1849 to 1854. She also records how she used the money, whether in purchases of books, silver spoons, celery glasses, or other objects she particularly wanted, or whether in small donations and gifts. These entries reflect, as do others in the diary, her strong, acquisitive interest in property, and her great satisfaction in having command over her own money.

A few of the entries lie outside the immediate area of Mrs. Pritchard's family and are of general interest. These include her description of the may-pole at Warrenton Female College in 1852 (pages 106-107), the description of her visit to Raleigh and the State Fair of 1854 where she saw an exhibition of the paintings of Oliver Perry Copeland (pages 53-55), and her vivid description of the great snow storm of January 17, 1857 (pages 83-84).

A typescript of Mrs. Pritchard's will, proved in 1914, accompanies the copy of the typescript of the diary.

Finding Media:

Main Entry Card

Geographic Cards

Norfolk, Va.

Warren County, N.C.

Subject Cards

Architects

Books and Reading

Bragg, Thomas

Catholic Church--Liturgy

Christmas

Copeland, Oliver Perry

Diseases

Fairs

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Finding Media: (continued)

Subject Cards (continued)

Carpets

Jones Family

May-Pole

Medicine

Pritchard Family

Quilting--Patterns

St. Mary's College, Raleigh

Snow Storms. See Winter Storms

Warrenton Female College

Winter Storms

Women

Women--Education

Women--Finance, Personal

Finding aid completed July 8, 1996, by Geo. Stevenson