

MRS. CATHARINE STRATTON LADD (MRS. GEORGE WILLIAMSON LIVERMORE LADD) Taken mostly from the Dictionary of American Biography. Written by Mrs. Ladd.

Mrs. Catharine Stratton Ladd, Mrs. George Williamson Livermore Ladd, school mistress, writer of fugitive prose, poems, verse, and artist was born in Richmond, Virginia, October 18, 1808; died in Fairfield County, South Carolina, January 10, 1899. Her father, James Stratton, arrived in Richmond from Ireland 1806, and a year later after this date married Martha Ann Collins. Six months after Catharine Ladd was born he fell ~~off~~ from a vessel off the coast and drowned.

Mrs. Catharine Ladd was educated in the schools of Richmond and was said to have been a playmate of Edgar Allen Poe. One of the most treasured recollections of Richmond was her meeting Lafayette at a public reception there in 1824. In 1828 she married George Williamson Livermore Ladd, who was born in Plymouth, New Hampshire, and who had been a seaman for ten years before; but who was then in the South as a portrait painter having studied under the famous B.F.B. Morse of Boston.

Accompanied by his mother, she went to Charleston, South Carolina, where they arrived in time to witness the jubilee of the election of Andrew Jackson. From Charleston they went to Augusta, Georgia. Here they remained until burned out by the great fire of 1829. Then they returned to South Carolina but later removed to Macon, Georgia, where for three years Mrs. Ladd was principal of Vineville Academy. Next she opened a school for girls in York, South Carolina. In 1839 she learned there was a large brick building on the main street of Winnsboro, South Carolina, that would be ideal for an academy. Previous to this time she had had as pupils for several years the daughters of the Honorable Osmond Woodward of Winnsboro. Mr. Woodward through his interest in getting her school in the town had the Ladd possessions moved by his teams to the large building, and on January 1, 1840. the Winnsboro Female Institute was opened in style.

In 1850 it was said there were 100 young lady pupils, some from as great a distance as Charleston, along with nine excellent teachers; and Mrs. Ladd remained principal until the school was closed by the Civil War.

Mrs. Ladd took a keen interest in public affairs, and it is said as early as 1831 she published an article entitled THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF MANUFACTURING IN SOUTH CAROLINA. It is also said she submitted a design for the Confederate flag as permanent president of the Ladies' Relief Association of Fairfield County she did much for the sick and wounded Confederate soldiers. Her son, Albert Washington Ladd, was wounded at the Battle of Seven Pines; her husband died July 14, 1864. She lost everything in 1865 when Sherman's troops burned her home which with wooden dining-hall sat south of the brick school building. After this she resided sometime in the building-dwelling-immediately north of the three-story school house.

She later added to her instruction courses dancing, acting, art and music. She supervised and instigated various types of operettas, plays in what was said to have been a hall built for these actions- this hall was called the Thespian Hall and it was said these dramas were the second ones originated with their own building, in the state. As late as 1773 students and local talent amused thus the village and

Mrs. Ladd's poems are characterized by strong religious feeling and love of Nature. Her occasional letters of reminiscence and her later poems which appeared in the Winnsboro press are signed "Mrs. C.LADD", but her earlier poems used other names and appeared in the second volume of the Southern Literary Messenger". Her articles on art and education as tales, essays, plays and news were well received. It is said she was a regular contributor to the News and Courier for years.

Today well-preserved printed programs of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and a finely executed piece of crochet in 100 thread, and several lovely lovely oil landscapes painted by her are treasured by her descendants. Until very recent years in the Thespian Hall there remained in moderately good physical condition backdrop scenery painted and used by Mrs. Ladd's students and painted by Mrs. Ladd.

Among the fine large oil portraits executed by George Williamson Livermore Ladd in the possession of Fairfield County folk are these of the Honorable Osmond Woodward and Martha Alice Williamson Woodward, his wife, in the home of Miss Alice A.B. Walker of Winnsboro and two portraits of the ancestors of Misses Julia and Mary Faucette of the Feasterville community of the county.

During some early part of her stay in the county she spent a short time in the Feasterville community, of Fairfield.

She retired there at beautiful Baena Vista Plantation in 1880, in her 91st year passing away. She is interred in the Salem Presbyterian Church cemetery although she had been a member of the Episcopal Church her lifetime. Mr. Ladd rests in a Winnsboro church-yard having passed away April 1864.

See below copy of records in books of the office of Clerk of Court of Fairfield County, South Carolina, showing ownership of the Ladd school in Winnsboro.

1829-Deed from Richard Cathcart Lot #53 on Congress Street, Winnsboro, S.C., to John Mc Master. Consideration \$200. + house

March 29, 1852 -Deed from John Mc Master Lot #53 and house on Congress Street, Winnsboro, S.C. to George W. Ladd. Consideration \$3,500.

December 2, 1862. Deed from George W. Ladd. Lot #53 plus other lots and house on Congress Street, Winnsboro, S.C. to Philip Porcher (Trustee for Mattie Egleston, wife of George Egleston) of Charleston. Consideration 6,000.

November 2, 1874. Deed from Maria Porcher of lots and residence on Congress Street, Winnsboro, S.C. to Priscilla Ketchin. Consideration \$3,000.

November 29, 1938. Deed to John Cathcart by Bank of Fairfield by Priscilla Ketchin and heirs. Consideration \$3,000.