

Mason, Mary Ann Bryan ^[1]

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By Richard Walser, 1991

6 Sept. 1802–31 Aug. 1881

Mary Ann Bryan Mason, writer, was born in [New Bern](#) ^[2], the daughter of John Council and Mary Ann Fulford Bryan. The Bryan family had been prominent in North Carolina for many generations. Mary Ann was educated in New Bern. On 10 June 1823 she married [Richard Sharpe Mason](#) ^[3], a native of Barbados in the West Indies; at that time, he was rector of Christ Church, New Bern. Between 1828 and 1840 Mason served Episcopal parishes and taught in colleges in New York State and Delaware. From 1840 until his death in 1874, he was rector of [Christ Church](#) ^[4], [Raleigh](#) ^[5]. There were six children: William S., Martha Ann, Richard Henry, Mary G. (Mrs. S. G. Ryan), Rebecca E. (Mrs. William S. Mitchell), and Annie (Mrs. Ben Brokenbough). A niece and adopted daughter, Mary A. Kinsey, married William Montfort Boylan in 1846.

Mrs. Mason, whose many talents were praised by Samuel A. Ashe, was a painter, sculptor, and musician as well as a writer. Her cameos were singularly prized. She is best remembered for *A Wreath from the Woods of Carolina* (1859) ^[6], the first book written exclusively for children by a North Carolinian. It is a group of religious moral stories, each illustrated by Mrs. Mason with a colored engraving of a native wildflower. *Her Church and Her Mother: A Story of Filial Piety* (1860) ^[7] is an anonymous short novel with its setting in [Raleigh](#) ^[5]. *Spring-Time for Sowing* ^[8], no copy of which has been cited, preceded *The Young Housewife's Counsellor and Friend, Containing Directions in Every Department of Housekeeping, Including the Duties of Wife and Mother* (1871) ^[9], which was reprinted in 1875 with the cover title, *Mrs. Mason's New Cookery*. Mary Ann Mason was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh.

References:

North Carolina Authors (1952)

Mary T. Tardy, *The Living Female Writers of the South* (1872)

Richard Walser, *Young Readers' Picturebook of Tar Heel Authors* (1966)

Additional Resources:

Mary Ann Bryan Mason: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/mason/bio.html> ^[10]

Subjects:

[Biographies](#) ^[11]

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Authors:

[Walser, Richard](#) ^[14]

Origin - location:

[Craven County](#) ^[15]

[Wake County](#) ^[16]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#),^[17]

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