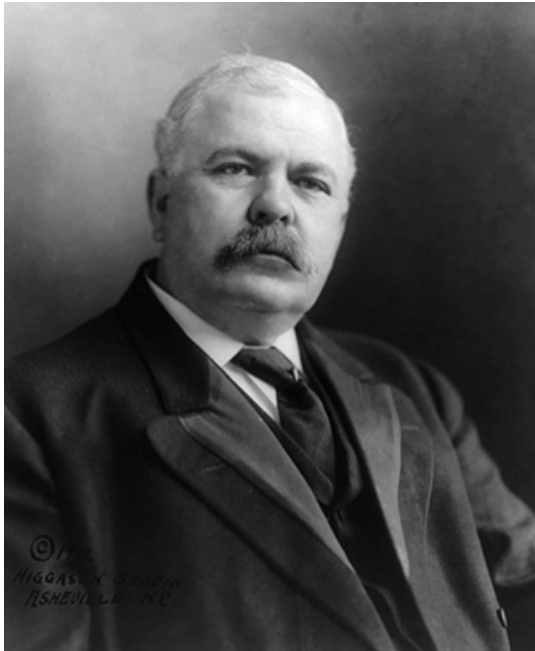


Pritchard, Jeter Conley ^[1]

Pritchard, Jeter Conley

by Joe L. Morgan, 1994

12 July 1857–10 Apr. 1921



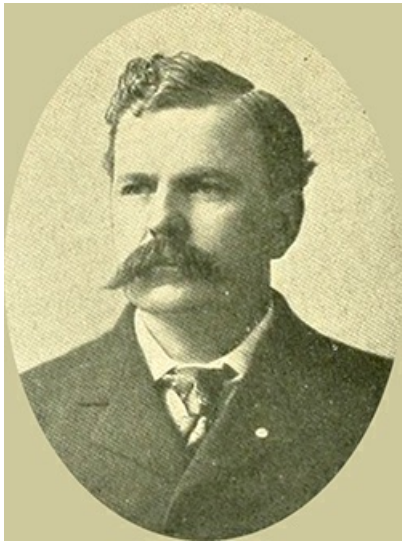
A 1912 photograph of Jeter Conley Pritchard.

Image from the Library of Congress.

^[2]Jeter Conley Pritchard, senator and judge, was born in Jonesboro, Tenn., the son of William H. and Elizabeth Brown Pritchard. Although he was seven years above the top age for enlistment in the Confederate army, the elder Pritchard enlisted as the paid substitute for Herman Cone, father of Ceasar ^[3] and Moses Cone ^[4]; he served throughout the war and after the surrender of Vicksburg contracted a fatal illness from which he died in Mobile, Ala. His widow, left to care for her family, apprenticed young Jeter at age twelve to a printer who also published the Jonesboro *Herald and Tribune*. Pritchard devoted himself to the tasks at hand and learned rapidly; at the end of his apprenticeship he became foreman of the *Union Flag and Commercial Advertiser*, another Jonesboro newspaper, where he remained until 1873. He studied at Martins Creek Academy, Erwin, Tenn., for two terms and then moved to Bakersville, N.C., where he became foreman of the weekly *Roan Mountain Republican*. Following further self-education, he became a partner in the newspaper and its associate editor.

In 1877 Pritchard's newspaper ^[5] career came to an end when he moved to Madison County ^[6]. There he farmed, operated a gristmill ^[7], and studied law under Colonel Pender A. McElroy. Pritchard moved to Marshall, the county seat, and began to practice law. He was a Republican ^[8] elector in 1880 at age twenty-three, a member of the General Assembly in 1885, 1887, and 1891, and a delegate-at-large to the Republican National Convention at Minneapolis in 1892. In 1888 he was the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor of North Carolina, and in 1891 he was the Republican caucus nominee for U.S. senator. Elected president of the North Carolina Protective Tariff League in 1891, Pritchard used that body to seize control of the Republican party organization.

In 1895 the Republicans and Populists ^[9] in the state legislature sent him to the U.S. Senate to complete the term of the late Senator Zebulon B. Vance ^[10]. Pritchard had been one of the organizers of the "cooperative movement," which resulted in his election by factions of these two parties. He thus became the first Republican elected to the Senate from a southern state in twenty years. As the only southern Republican there, he was frequently consulted by President William McKinley on matters pertaining to the South, but he declined a cabinet appointment in the McKinley administration. Reelected for successive terms, he remained in the Senate until 1901. Election to his final term came following a bitter fight with Marion Butler ^[11], leader of the Populists. In Congress, Pritchard introduced the first bill for a Southern Forest Preserve which eventually resulted in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park ^[12].



A photograph of Jeter C. Pritchard, circa 1898. Image from Archive.org. ^[13] Pritchard was state Republican chairman during the 1890s and again in 1902, and he served simultaneously as a member of the Republican National Committee for a number of years. He was a recognized leader in all councils and policies of his party and his political following was very large.

Appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt, Pritchard became an associate justice of the supreme court of the District of Columbia in 1903 and made an impressive record. The following year he was named judge of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth District. Soon after taking his seat on the bench, Judge Pritchard granted a writ of habeas corpus in the case of editor Josephus Daniels ^[14], who had been adjudged guilty of contempt of court by the district judge in Raleigh. Daniels was discharged and Pritchard's decision was widely hailed by the press, both domestic and foreign. He also made other significant decisions, some of which were appealed but uniformly sustained. He continued to serve until his death.

Pritchard was married in 1877 to Augusta L. Ray and they became the parents of three sons and a daughter—William D. (an army officer killed in the Philippines in 1904), George M. ^[15], Thomas A., and Ida (Mrs. Thomas S. Rollins). Following the death in 1886 of his wife, Pritchard married Melissa Bowman by whom he had another son, J. McKinley. After the death of his second wife in 1902, Judge Pritchard married Lillian E. Saum in 1903. During World War I ^[16] he spoke widely in support of Liberty Loan movements in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. He endorsed drives by the YMCA ^[17] and the Red Cross. ^[18]

Pritchard died in Asheville and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.

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