

Petition Seeking Divorce

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To the Honorable the Congress of the United States now setting

The petition and memorial of Ann Alricks of the town and County of Alexandria in the District of Columbia respectfully sheweth; That in February 1794 she intermarried with a Mr West Alricks at that time a merchant in very good business and of respectable connections. That when your Petitioner was married she was only fifteen years of age. That she lived with her husband until September 1797 a period of almost four years when they parted by mutual consent, having lived very unhappily together, and have never since lived together. She forbears from all crimination but four years experience, have evinced the melancholy truth, that Mr Alricks and herself can never make each other happy, or even live together. Your Petitioner is left with two infant female children, without any means of support for them, or for herself, but what she receives from the bounty of a very aged widowed mother, whose property is dependent upon her life, and from the kindness of a sister, whose power to aid her may not continue long.

That after your Petitioner and her husband had seperated, he remained in this neighbourhood several years, and always declared his intention to petition the Legislature of Virginia for a divorce, in which your petitioner would most cheerfully have joined him, and she has now in her possession letters, from him to her mother, requesting her aid and concurrence in such a measure, but your Petitioner further shews, that some eighteen months or two years ago, he left this part of the Country, and went she knows not whither, and that he has not been since heard of.

That your petitioner being yet possessed of youth and health, and not destitute of respectable friends and connections, indulges the hope, that a prudent and discreet conduct, might enable her to better much her situation, was she freed from those matrimonial obligations contracted with Mr Alricks, almost in her infancy, which have long since become equally embarrassing and intollerable to them both.

As your Petitioner is a resident of the District of Columbia, she is advised that it ~~belongs~~ belongs exclusively to this honorable body, to grant her the relief she prays for, and though assembled principally for great national concerns, she respectfully expresses a hope, that the happiness of an individual, will not be deemed by you an object unworthy of your attention.

She therefore respectfully solicits your Honors to take her case into consideration, to release her from those matrimonial engagements which she has entered into with Mr West Alricks, and to declare their marriage null and void.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall pray etc.

Ann Alricks