



**Record Group:** Dr. John W. Ward (1840-1916)  
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**Biographical Note**

Dr. John Wesley Ward was the second superintendent of the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton. Born in Salem, New Jersey, on 12 February 1840, Ward graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1866. He was a protégè of Dr. Horace A. Buttolph, under whom he was appointed second assistant physician at the state asylum in 1867, and first assistant physician in 1873. Dr. Ward ascended to the position of medical superintendent in February 1876, and held this post for over thirty years.

In 1907, Ward was dismissed as superintendent by the board of governors amid much controversy. Apparently, a typhoid epidemic was the catalyst for his dismissal. The controversy surrounding these events centered upon an administrative policy which divided control of the facility between Dr. Ward and an operations manager responsible for maintenance of the asylum grounds. The separation of control may have resulted in the neglect of responsibilities that did not fall clearly within the prescribed areas of either division. With the quiet resignation of the operations manager, the board apparently blamed Dr. Ward alone for the epidemic.

Ward died nine years after his dismissal at his home near Pennington, NJ, 23 August 1916. He left a widow, Horacana B. (Sager) Ward, and one son, John W. Ward Jr.

**Bibliography**

Hammell, Charlotte Louise. "The New Jersey State Hospital at Trenton, 1848-1908"  
 [M.A. thesis]. University of Chicago, 1938.

New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton. *Annual Reports of the Officers of the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton*. Trenton, NJ, 1877-1907.

"Will Hold Ward Funeral Saturday..." *Trenton Evening Times*. Trenton, NJ, 24 August 1916, p. 2.

**Content Note**

Created by Dr. Ward himself, the two scrapbooks comprising this series relate most specifically to his activities as superintendent of the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum at Trenton. The volumes contain memorabilia such as

photographs, newspaper clippings, and correspondence (in no apparent arrangement). The majority of the photographs depict the grounds of the state asylum, its staff, and its physicians; a few others show Ward's family members. The newspaper clippings deal primarily with the controversy surrounding Dr. Ward's dismissal as superintendent in 1907: in editorial content, they sympathize with Ward and condemn the board's decision to fire him. The correspondence consists of letters of recommendation from Dr. Ward's instructors at the University of Pennsylvania to Dr. H. A. Buttolph, and letters of resignation from several of Dr. Ward's assistant physicians.

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