

Anna Lydia Ward

1846 - 1933

"To have had among us in Waterbury for almost 50 years the personality that Anna L. Ward's life stood for is a privilege."

- Waterbury American

Anna Lydia Ward was born in Bloomfield, New Jersey, in 1846 to Israel and Almeda (Hanks) Ward. Her father, a successful businessman, and mother instilled a love of travel in her that remained a pleasure throughout her life. In 1886 with Florentine Hayden of Waterbury, Ward journeyed to Northern Labrador, and made an ethnological study of the Eskimos, progressing northward into land never before visited by "white women". Their endeavors produced an illustrated lecture that gained them national recognition. In 1887 Ward moved to Waterbury where she resided with Hayden for nearly five decades.

Ward's literary career began about 1880 when she became associate editor of the Hoyt and Ward Encyclopedia of Practical Quotations. Some of her other works included A Dictionary of Quotations from the Poets, A Dictionary of Quotations in Prose, the superlative History of the Town and City of Waterbury, Waterbury Illustrated and articles for periodicals. While compiling Surf and Wave, an anthology of poems about the sea, Ward corresponded with many noted nineteenth century writers including Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Bryant.

As assistant editor of The History of the Town and City of Waterbury, Ward spent nine years with her "labor of love" collecting material, researching facts, organizing correspondence, conducting personal interviews and selecting illustrations and photographs. She even traveled to Ohio to gather documents from former Waterbury residents who had relocated. Recognizing her amazing behind-the-scenes contribution to the second hundred years of Waterbury history, editor Anderson said, "without it our history of modern Waterbury could not have come into being" and "the elaborate index is the fruit of her skill in a field in which she is known as an expert."

She was a member of the Mattatuck Historical Society, the Waterbury Women's Club for nearly 40 years and assisted many charities. She was also president of the Institute of Craft and Industry, Inc. (formerly the Women's League) from 1896 to 1921. This institution helped many less fortunate girls to develop job and lifelong coping skills. Ward worked tirelessly on behalf of needy young girls.



She was appointed by the governor of Connecticut as a commissioner to select a woman factory inspector for Connecticut and in 1909, she spoke on the subject, "Industrial Training for Girls," before the Labor Committee of Connecticut. In addition to being a writer, researcher and indexer, she was a member of the Institute of Jamaica and the American Social Science Association.

The newspaper described Ward as possessing a "personality that naturally radiated" and noted "she was keen-witted in her conversation, in friendship kindly, loyal, enduring the test of time, alert to every-day topics." Anna Ward, who died February 2, 1933, was a pioneer, sociologist, scientist, writer and community leader. She made a major contribution to the documentation and perpetuation of Waterbury history.