



The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

John Dod Ward family papers

1800-1936

MssCol 22391

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Summary

Title: John Dod Ward family papers

Date: 1800-1936

Size: 3.69 linear feet (5 boxes, 2 volumes, 1 oversized folder, 1 tube)

Source: Purchased from Michael Brown Rare Books LLC, 2013.

Abstract: John Dod Ward (1795-1873) was an American marine engineer who lived and worked in New Jersey, Vermont, New York, and Montreal. His son, Charles Dod Ward (1838-1915), was a civil engineer who married Ada Davey, daughter of Henry Lewis Davis and Jane Moore Sprong of Oswego, New York. The John Dod Ward family papers date from 1800 to 1936 and document the activities and lineage of the Ward, Roburds, Davis, and Sprong families through correspondence, business papers, diaries, photographs, and genealogical research files. John Dod Ward and Charles Dod Ward are the best-represented individuals in the collection.

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Creator History

John Dod Ward (1795-1873), born to Silas Ward and Phoebe Dod, was an American marine engineer who lived and worked in New Jersey, Vermont, New York, and Montreal. He built and repaired several steamship engines independently and at various foundries along the East Coast and in Canada. In 1819, Ward established The Eagle Foundry in Montreal, Quebec. The foundry was renamed John D. Ward and Co. after Ward brought on his two brothers, Samuel and Lebbeus Ward. In 1832, he sold his share of the business to his brothers, and in 1837 purchased Novelty Iron Works in New York City.

John Dod Ward met and married Laura Maria Roburds (1798-1877) in Vergennes, Vermont around 1835. Together they had several children; among them was Charles Dod Ward (1838-1915). Charles was a civil engineer in the Department of Water Supply of Brooklyn, New York, and for the Morris Canal in North Jersey. He also surveyed and designed for water works and railroads in Ohio, New York, and New Jersey. Charles D. Ward married Ada (Davis) Davey, daughter of Henry Lewis Davis and Jane

Moore Sprong of Oswego, New York.

Scope and Content Note

The John Dod Ward family papers date from 1800 to 1936 and document the activities and lineage of the Ward, Roburds, Davis, and Sprong families through correspondence, business papers, diaries, photographs, and genealogical research files.

John Dod Ward and Charles Dod Ward are the best-represented individuals in the collection. John Dod Ward's correspondence, business papers, and writings comprise the bulk of the collection and primarily document his business activities from the time he sold the Eagle Foundry in Montreal in 1832 until after he purchased Novelty Iron Works in 1837. Most of the letters relate to business transactions such as duties to be paid on importing goods; engine construction specifications; and letters from his brothers, Samuel and Lebbeus. Business records and invoices document the purchase of steam engine parts and some personal goods. Material relating to litigation against Ward by the Saint Alban's Steam Boat Company consists of letters of agreement, engine design descriptions, legal complaints, and notes taken during the court hearing. Also present is a request from the New York City Water Commissioners for sealed proposals for the construction of water pipes for the Croton Aqueduct. Ward's political writings document his opinions on the Civil War and the general state of the nation during the 1860s.

Charles Dod Ward's career as a civil engineer is captured through diaries detailing the survey and design of railroads in Cincinnati; Washington, D.C.; and Philadelphia. A journal belonging to Ward describes his travels throughout Europe, Egypt, and the Middle East in 1874. Personal correspondence, receipts for personal goods, and a handwriting notebook are also included. Ward family photographs consist of cabinet cards, tintypes, and portrait prints of John, Laura, and Charles Ward, and other unidentified individuals. The majority of the photographs are held in a photograph album.

The Sprong family material consists of letters to Major Bernard Sprong of Mackinac Island, Michigan from friends and family, some of which discuss an outbreak of cholera in New York and Canada. A diary containing Jane Moore Sprong's original poetry is also present. Davis family papers consist of correspondence, a cemetery map and plot indenture, an astrological birth chart for Henry L. Davis, and his journal. His daughter, Katherine Hugunnin Davis, was founding principal of the elementary school of The Barnard School for Girls in New York City. Her work is documented through certificates, announcements, and programs. Material for the Roburds family consists primarily of letters to Abigail Roburds from her daughter, Laura Ward, and her grandchildren. Files for the Moore, Weare, and Whiting families only contain genealogical notes.

The collection also holds Florence M. Griswold's Civil War journal, which reveals the details of camp life during his military service in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Genealogical research files compiled by Ada and Laura Ward, and Ada's sister, Katherine Hugunnin Davis contain correspondence, family histories, photographs, and genealogical notes. Correspondence concerns their genealogical research as well as their application and acceptance into the Daughters of the American Revolution. Additional genealogical notes can be found throughout the collection.

Key Terms

Occupations

Civil engineers -- United States -- 19th century
Marine engineers -- United States -- 19th century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence
Diaries
Family papers

Subjects

Genealogy
Genealogy -- Research
Iron foundries

Geographic Names

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives

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 - b. 1 f. 6-8 Davis, Henry Lewis 1816-1897
 - b. 1 f. 9 Davis, Katherine 1872-1936
 - b. 1 f. 10 Dod 1914-1922
 - o. 1 Dod Family Tree.
 - b. 2 f. 1-5 Griswold, Florence M. -- Civil War Journal 1862-1872
 - b. 2 f. 6 Hugunnin 1817-1873
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 - b. 2 f. 7 Moore circa 1915
 - o. 1 Roberts Family Tree
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 - o. 1 Roburds Family Tree.
 - Sprong
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 - v. 1 Family Bible 1858
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 - Pencil in case.
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Ward (cont.)

John Dod (cont.)

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- b. 4 f. 11 Saint Alban's Steam Boat Company 1828-1834
- b. 5 f. 1 Laura and Ada Davis -- Daughters of the American Revolution 1904-1913
- b. 5 f. 2 Laura Maria 1873-1877
- b. 5 f. 3 Lebbeus 1901
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