

Ray, John Edwin ^[1]

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by Rebecca S. Mason, 1994

22 Jan. 1852–17 Jan. 1918

John Edwin Ray, educator, was born near Neuse ^[2] in Wake County ^[3], the son of Joseph and Mary Justice Ray. He was graduated from Wake Forest College ^[4] with an A.M. degree in 1875. For ten years he served as a teacher at the North Carolina Institute for the Blind in Raleigh ^[5]. During the period 1887–94 he was superintendent of the Colorado Springs School for the Deaf and Blind, and from 1894 to 1896 he was superintendent of the Kentucky State School for the Deaf and Dumb. Returning to Raleigh in 1896, he served as superintendent of the North Carolina School for the Blind until his



death twenty-one years later. Meredith College. Presented on Internet Archive.

^[6]

Ray was influential in persuading the state legislature to appropriate funds for the school. The culmination of his efforts was the purchase shortly before his death of an eight-acre tract west of the state prison for a new school. His concern for education extended into politics, as he worked with J. Y. Joyner ^[7], state superintendent of public instruction, to convince voters of the need for a local school tax.

Active in his church, Ray served as a deacon and a Sunday school teacher in the First Baptist Church of Raleigh. He also was corresponding secretary of the Baptist State Convention from 1877 to 1889 and a member of the board of trustees for Meredith College ^[8] and the Thomasville Orphanage. He was the author of *A Trip Abroad: Sketches of Men and Manners, People and Places, in Europe* ^[9] (1882) and *Our Danger Signal* ^[10] (1892), which advocated prohibition.

In November 1881 he married Finie Carter of Wilson. Their children were Mrs. C. O. Abernathy, Mrs. Arthur Henderson, Hardy Murphee, Dr. Barton J., and Dr. John E.; John was killed in action in World War I ^[11]. Mrs. Ray was widely known for her work with disabled veterans in North Carolina, and because of her assistance at the U.S. Veterans Hospital at Oteen near Asheville ^[12], she was referred to as "Mother Ray." An evergreen tree was planted in Capitol Square, Raleigh,

in her honor. Ray died in Raleigh and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery ^[13].

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Additional Resources:

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