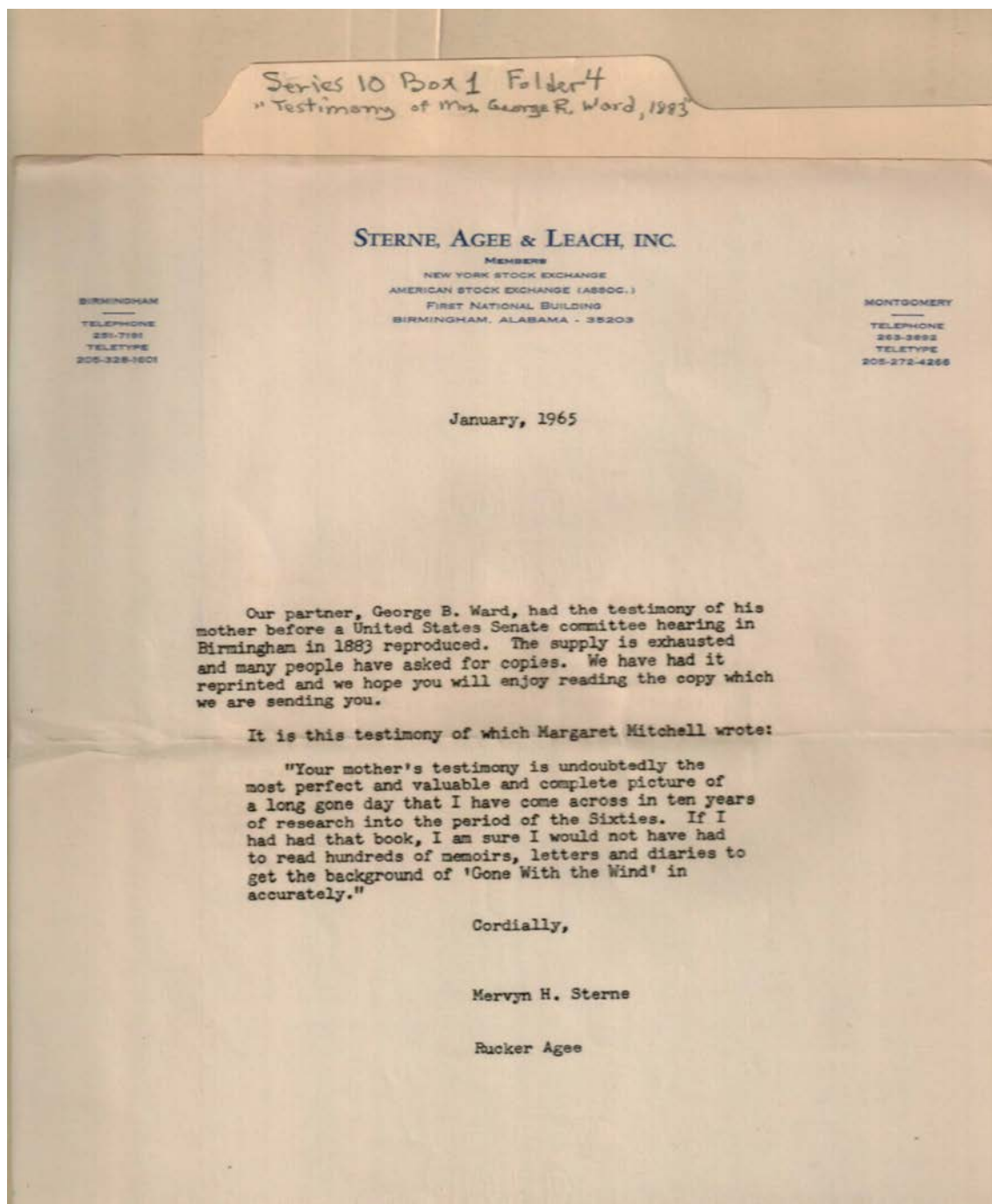


Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 1, Folder 4

"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward," 1883

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Names:

Agee, Rucker
Leach,

Mitchell, Margaret
Sterne, Mervyn H.

Ward, George B.

Places:

Birmingham, AL

Types:

correspondence

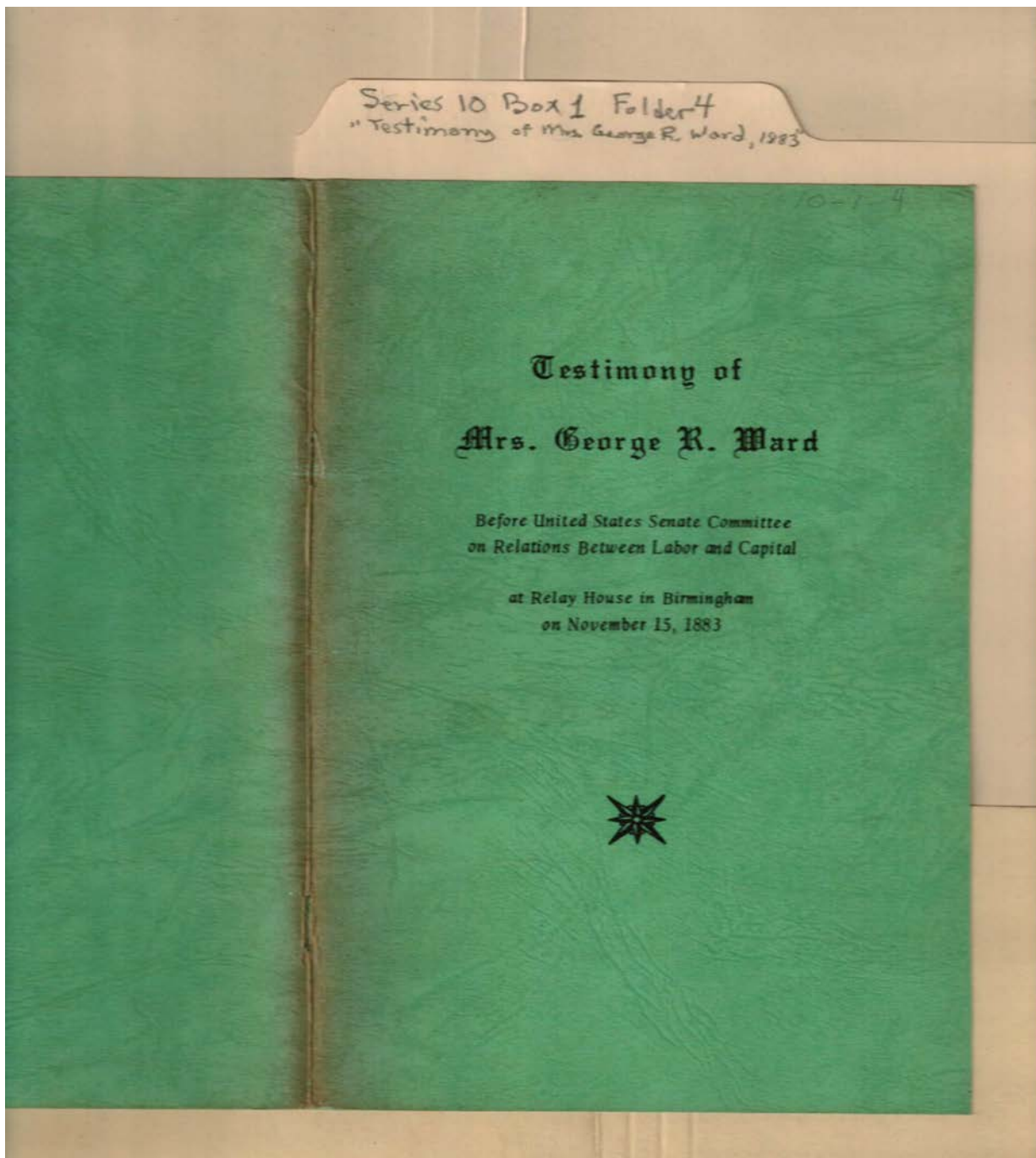
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Jan 1965

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"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward," 1883

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Names:

Testimony of Mrs.
George R. Ward

Places:

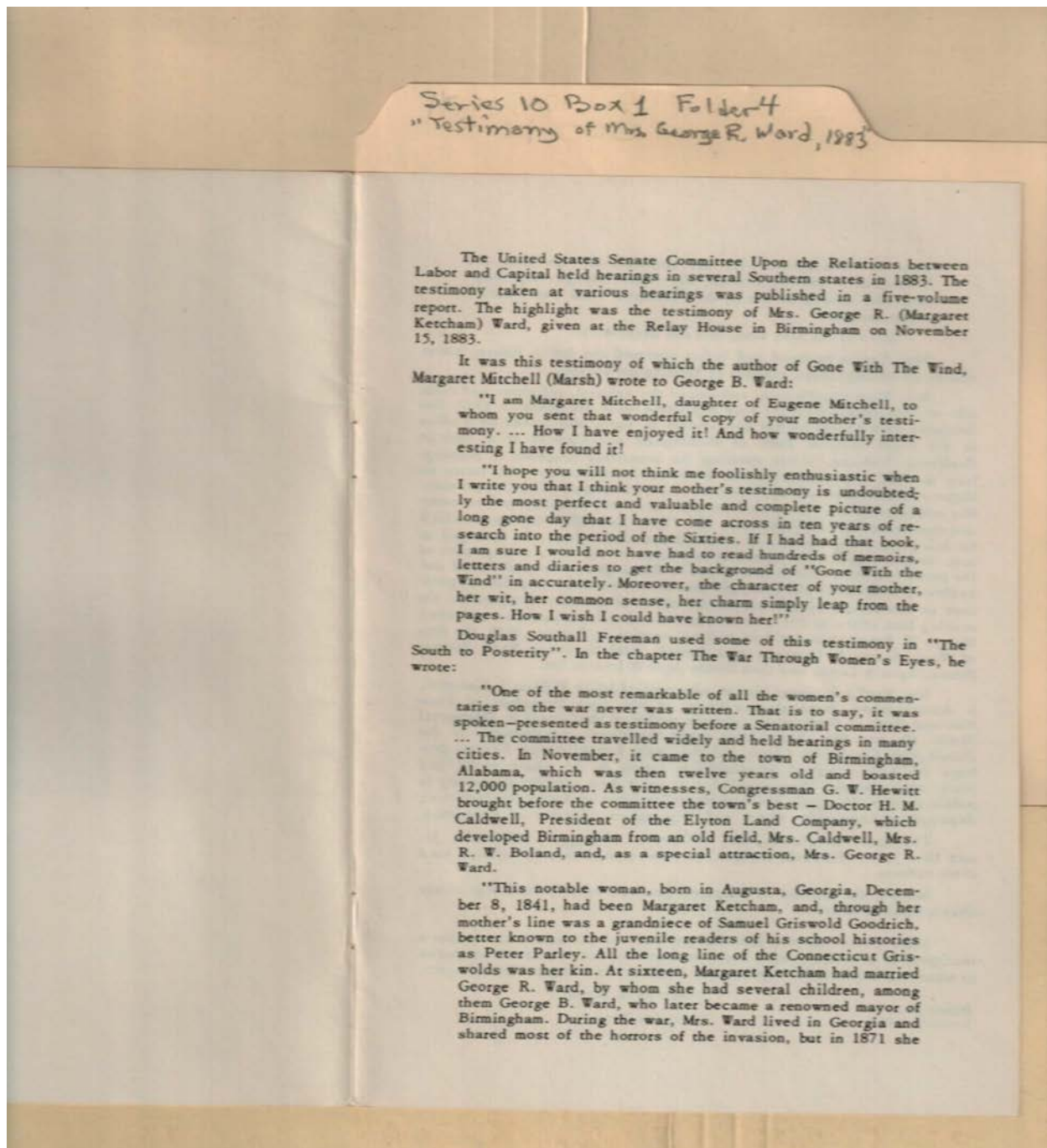
Birmingham, AL

Types:

booklet

Dates:

Nov 15, 1883



Names:

Boland, R. W., Mrs.
Caldwell, H. M., Dr.
Caldwell, Mrs.
Freeman, Douglas
Southall

Goodrich, Samuel
Griswold
Hewitt, G. W.,
Congressman
Ketcham, Margaret

Mitchell, Eugene
Mitchell, Margaret
Parley, Peter
Ward, George B.,
Mayor

Ward, George R.,
Mrs.

Places:

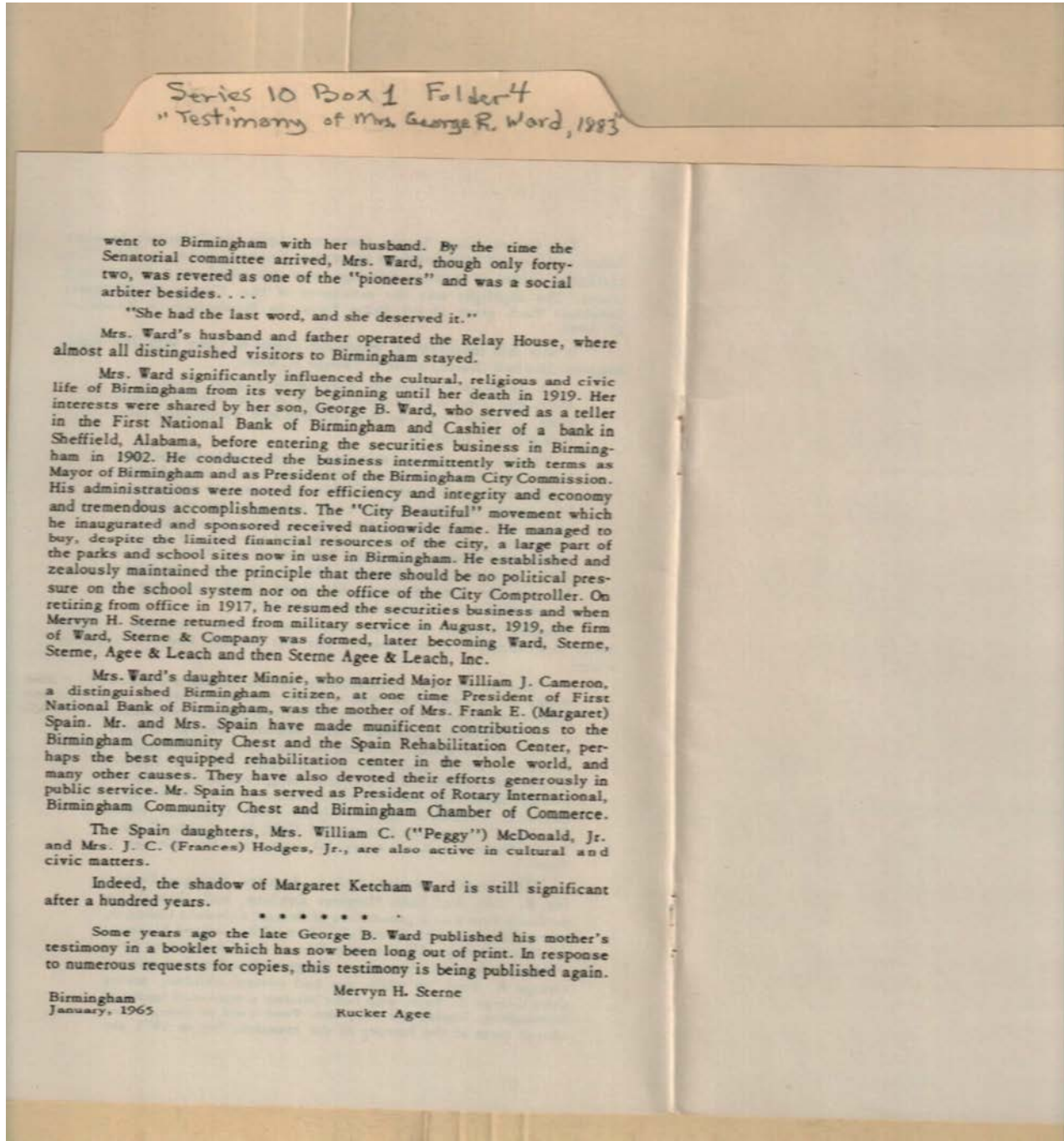
Birmingham, AL

Types:

article

Dates:

Nov 15, 1883



Names:

Agee, Rucker
Cameron, William J.,
Major

Hodges, J. C., Jr.,
Mrs. (Frances)
McDonald, William
C., Jr., Mrs. (Peggy)

Spain, Frank E., Mrs.
(Margaret)
Sterne, Mervyn H.
Ward, George B.

Ward, Minnie
Ward, Mrs.
Ware, Margaret
Ketcham

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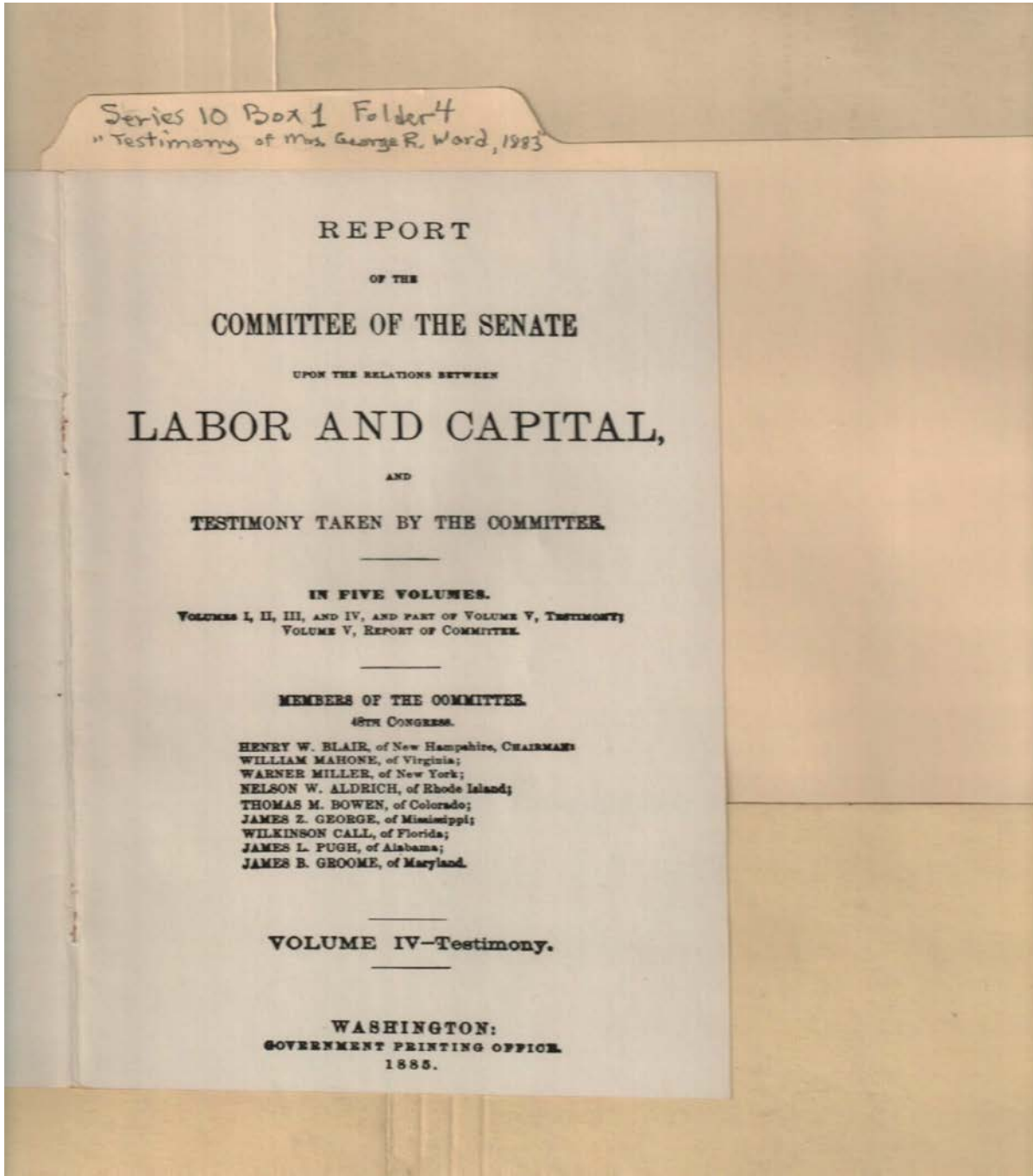
Birmingham, AL

Types:

article

Dates:

Jan 1965



Names:

Aldrich, Nelson W.
Blair, Henry W.
Bowen, Thomas M.

Call, Wilkinson
George, James Z.
Groome, James B.

Mahone, William
Miller, Warner
Pugh, James L.

Places:

Washington, DC

Types:

testimony

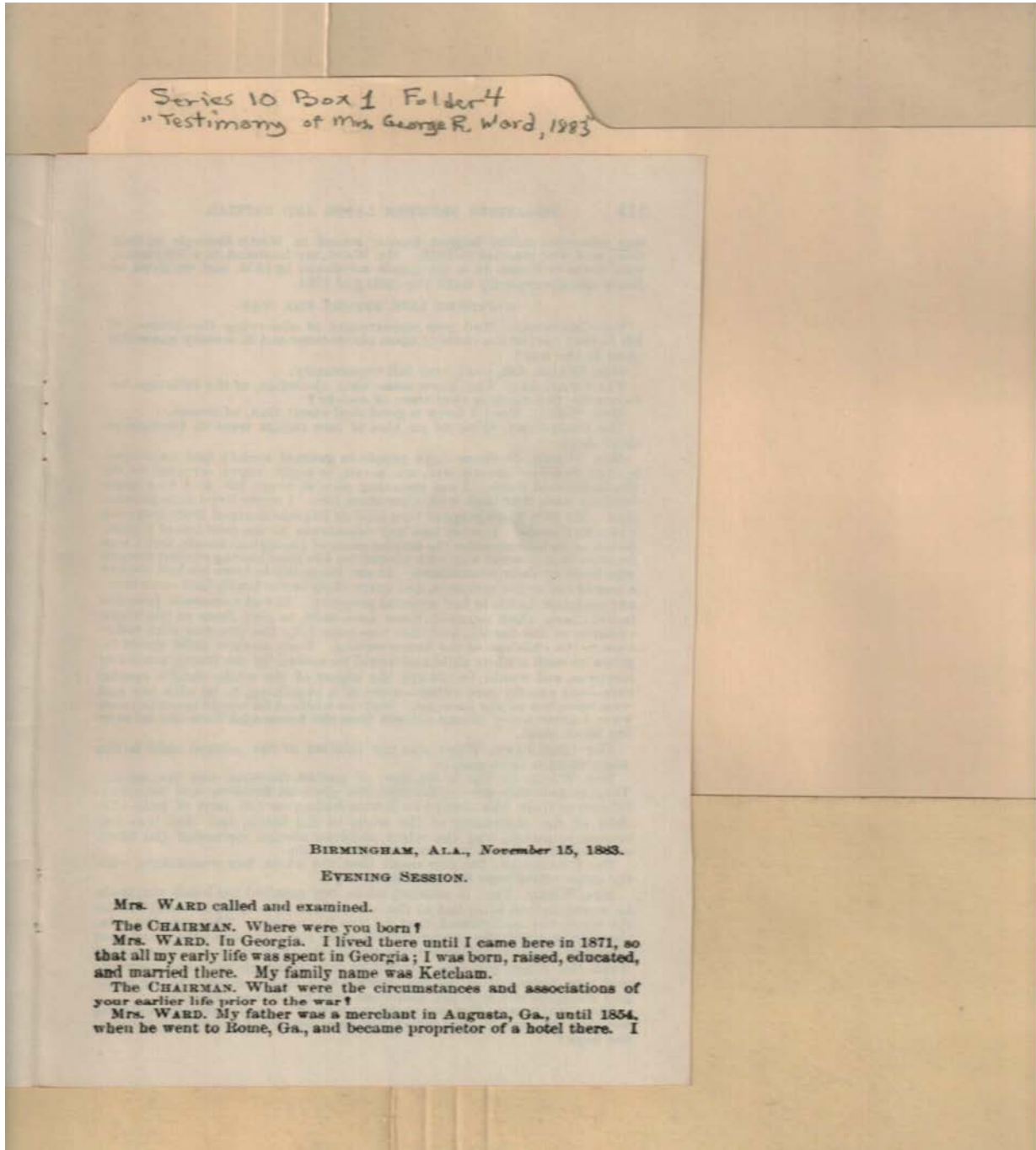
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1885

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"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward," 1883

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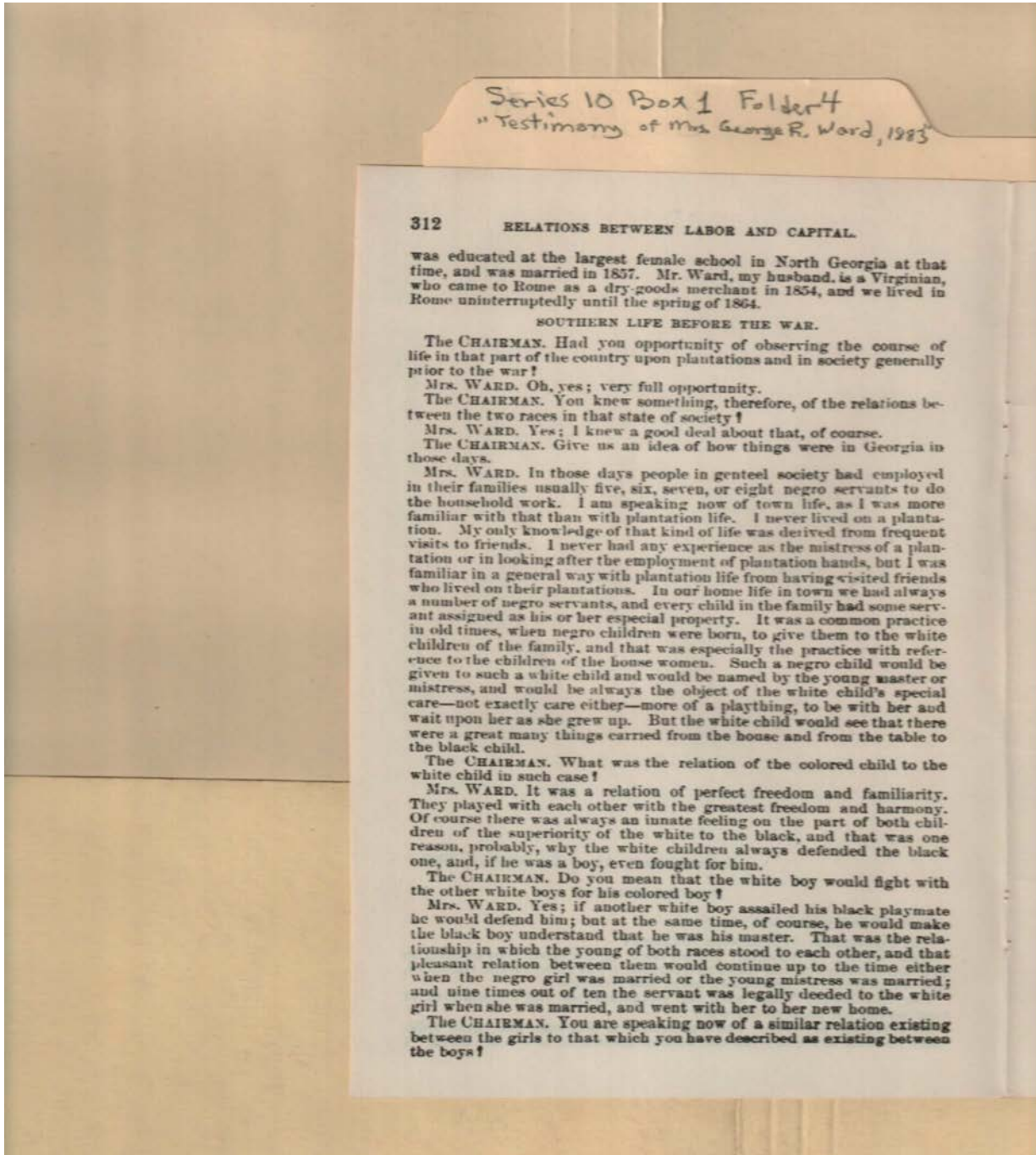
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Dates:

Nov 15, 1883



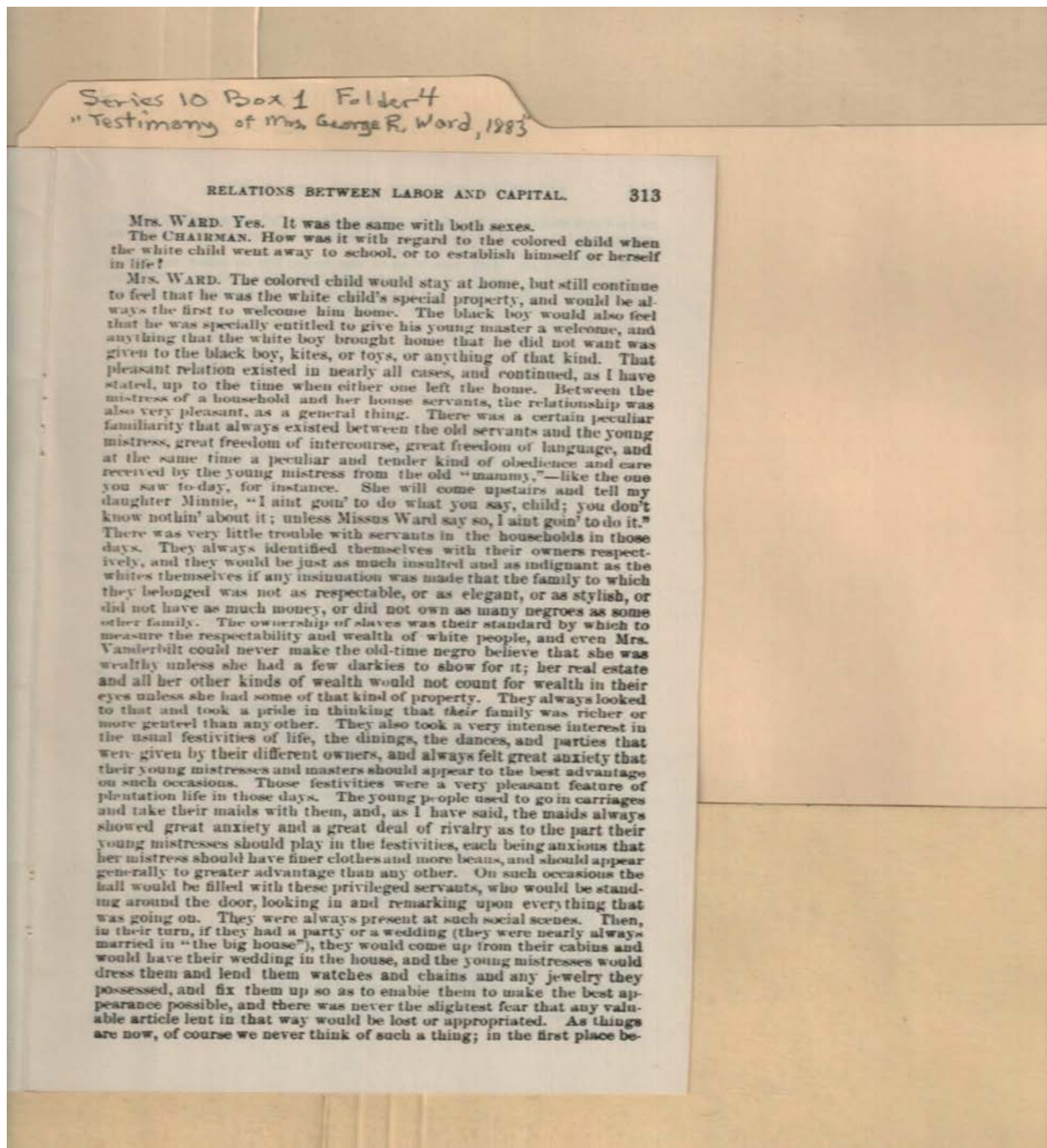
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Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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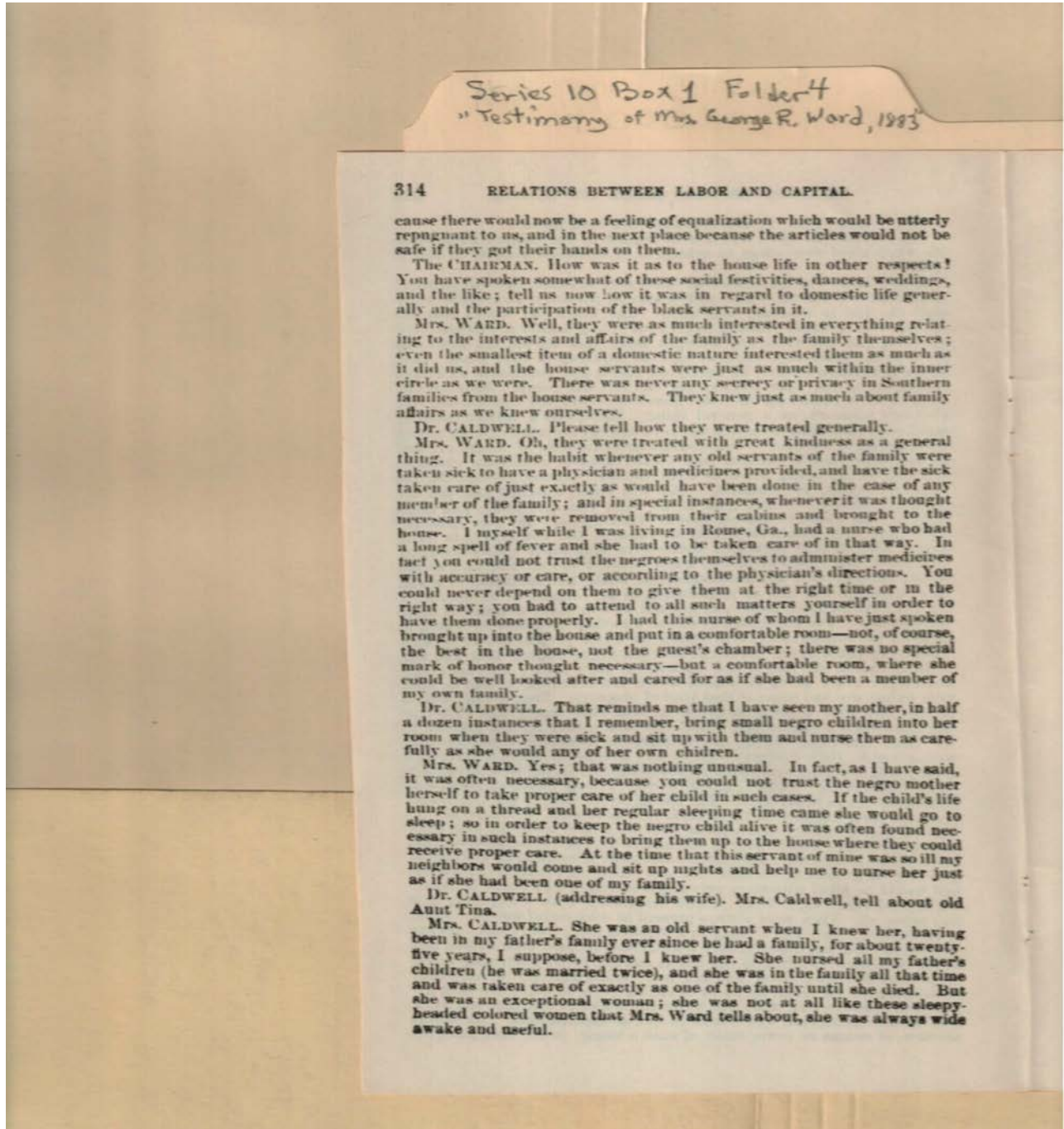
, Minnie

Vanderbilt, Mrs.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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Names:

, Aunt Tina

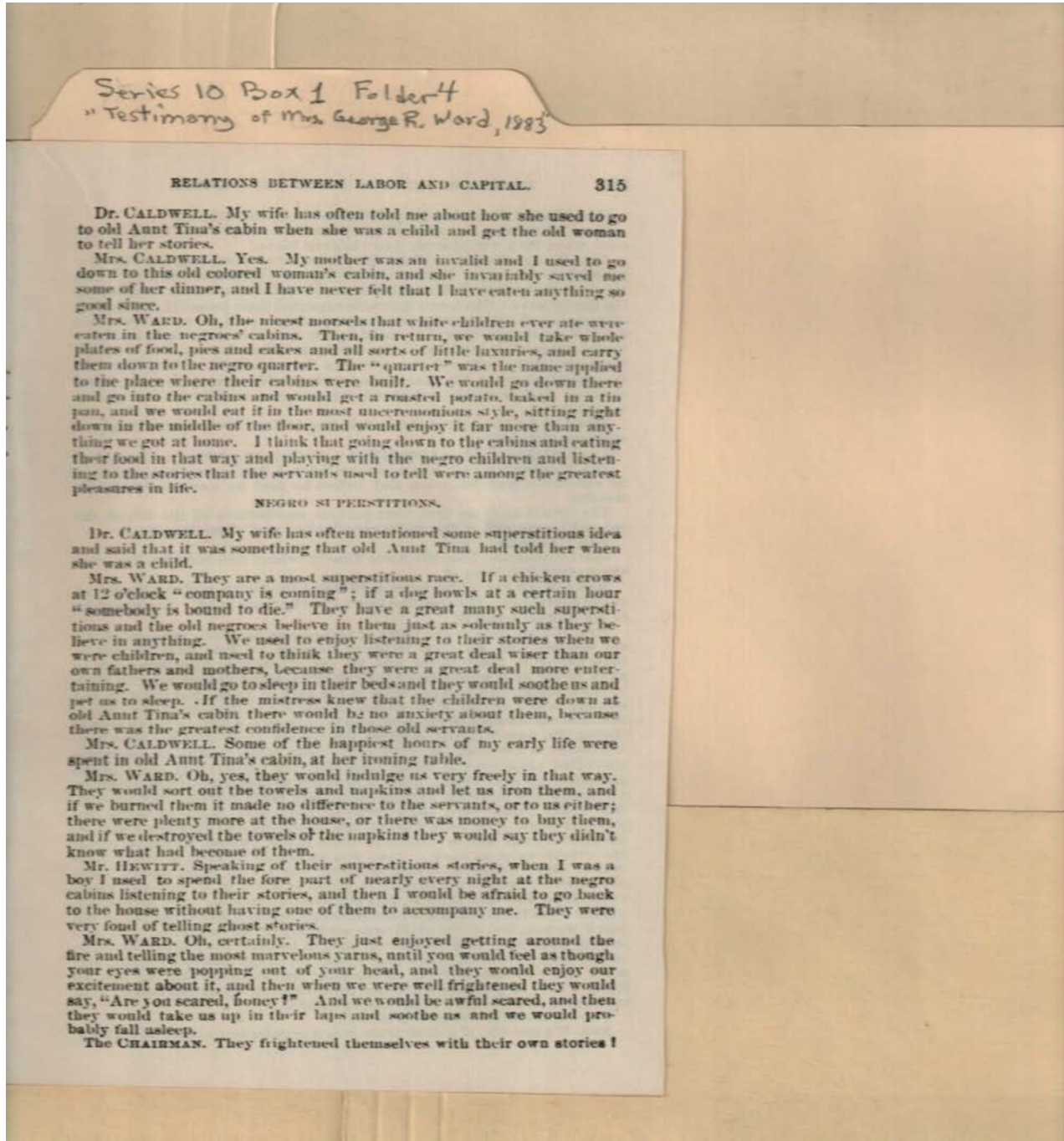
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Caldwell, Mrs.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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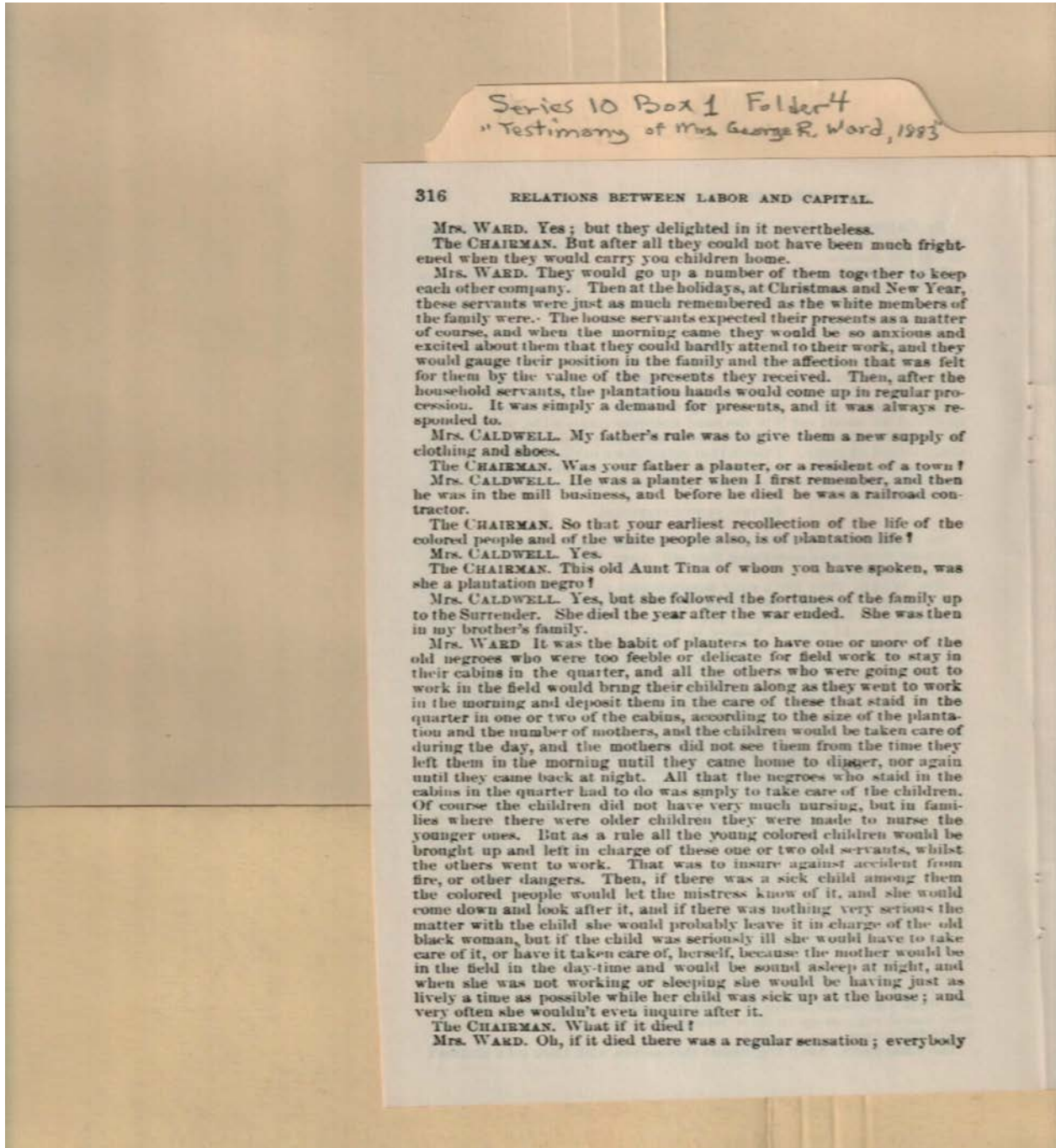
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Caldwell, Dr.

Caldwell, Mrs.
Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



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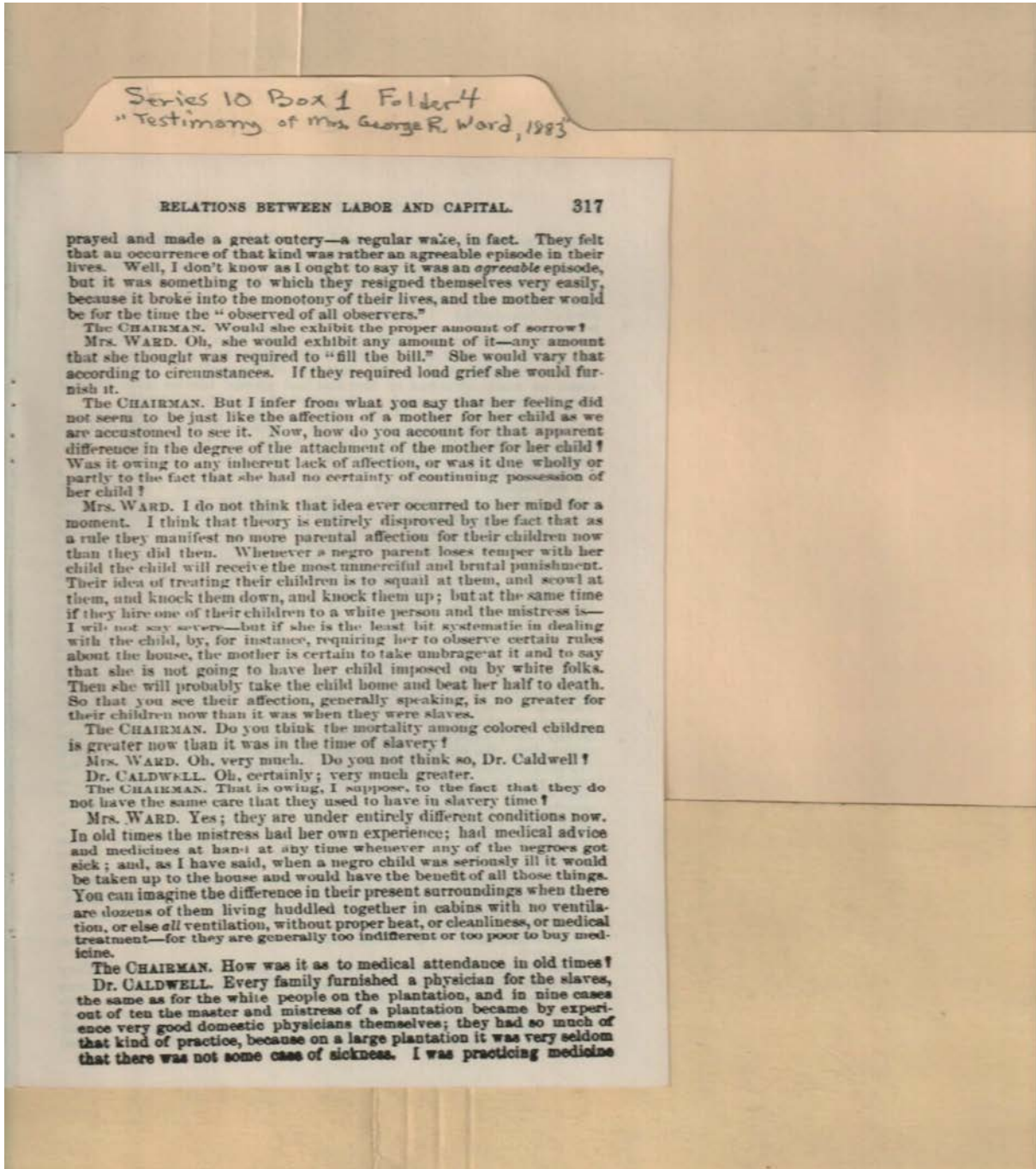
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Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



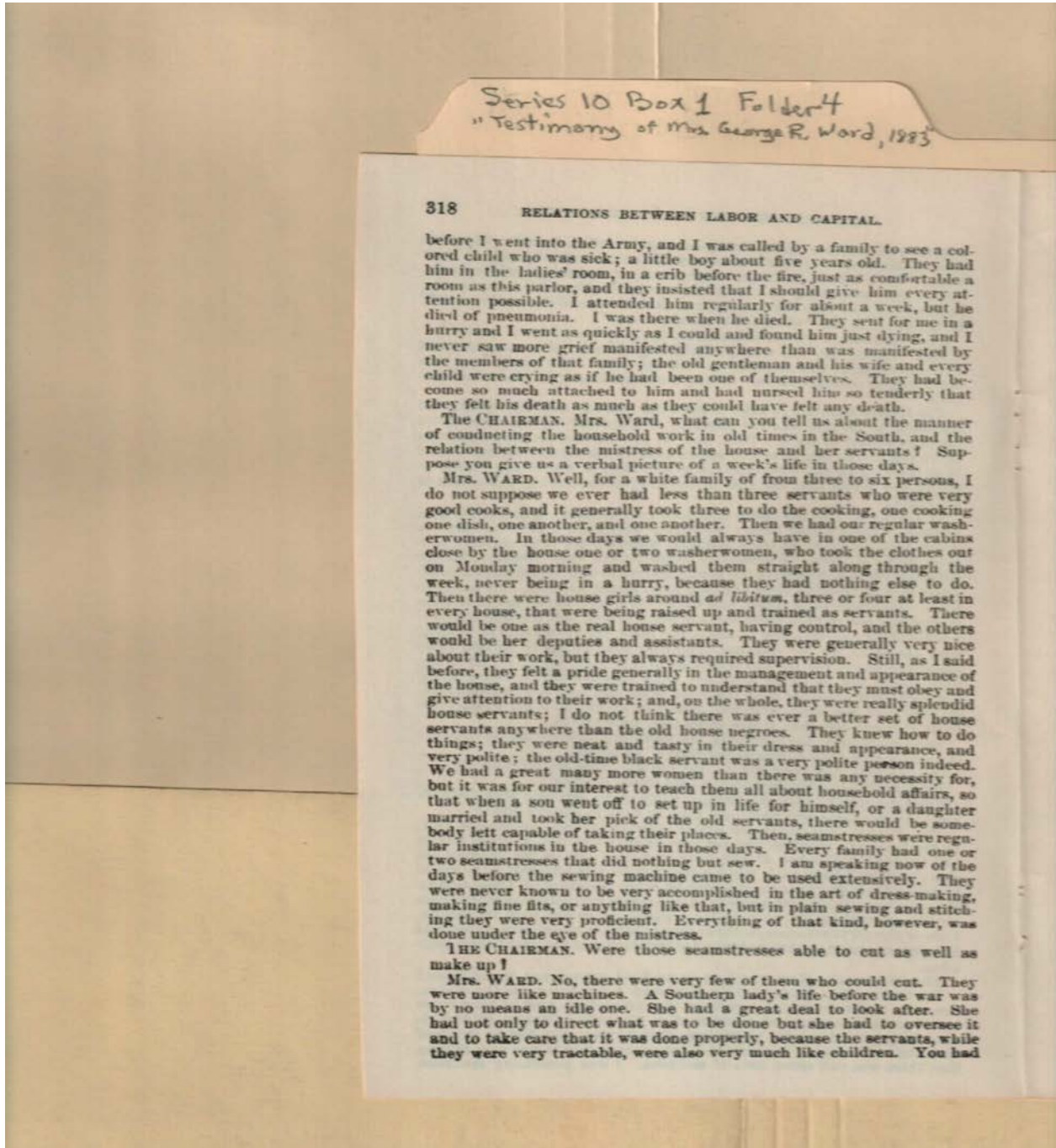
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Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



Names:

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony

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"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward, 1883"

RELATIONS BETWEEN LABOR AND CAPITAL. 319

to map out everything for them and supervise their work, and when you did that they would do it very well.

The CHAIRMAN. What occasion was there for correction of those servants, and in what way were they corrected when it became necessary?

Mrs. WARD. I never saw a house servant corrected in my life, so I do not know anything about that. I suppose that on the plantations they may have taken them and given them regular castigations when it was necessary, but I never saw a household servant whipped.

The CHAIRMAN. How about correcting the colored children?

Mrs. WARD. Oh, the children would be corrected and slapped just as you might do with your own child; not any more, I think.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you ever know a white mother to take the part of a black child against her own?

Mrs. WARD. Many and many a time. The white children were never allowed to impose on the negro children. There was always a feeling that where it was a question of equality or equally balanced rights the black child must yield; but if it was a question where the negro child was clearly in the right—for instance, if the children separated and the black child wanted to keep one of the playthings and the white one did not want to allow it, in such a case I never knew a white mother to take her own child's part. Our people always went upon the principle that if their children played with the negro children they must take their share of the consequences and the negroes must be protected in their rights. On the whole, however, the relations between the white and the black children before the war were very amicable, pleasant, and harmonious.

The CHAIRMAN. You never knew so much about the plantation cruelties and the abuse and even the murder of the colored people by the whites as we did up North?

Mrs. WARD. Oh, no; I could put you on the stand and, I suppose, you could tell me all about that.

The CHAIRMAN. I cannot remember so far back as you can. [Laughter.]

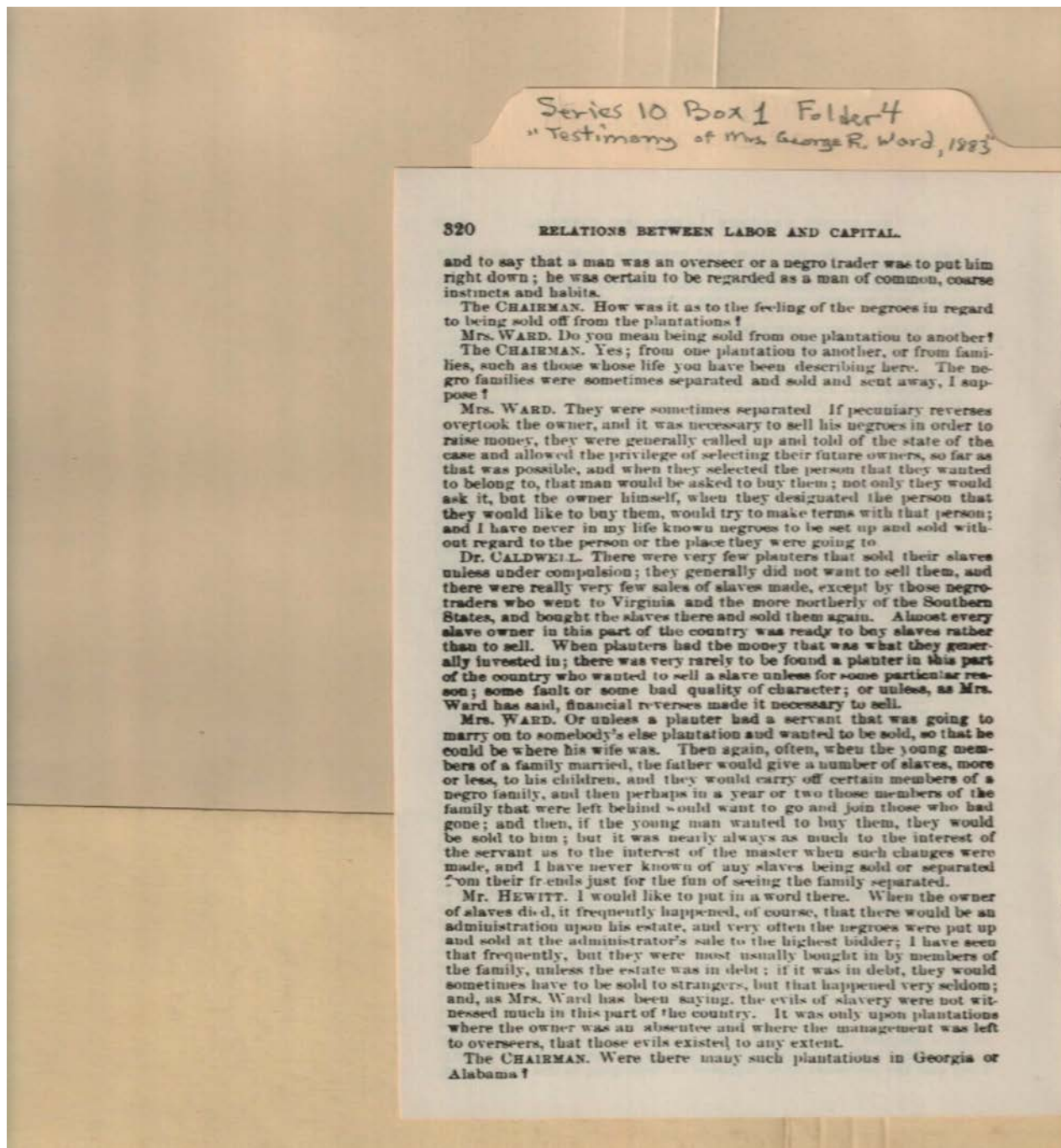
Mrs. WARD. I suspect you do not like to remember so far back; but joking aside, I never had an opportunity to learn anything about those reported cruelties because I never was on a plantation where the master was away and the negroes were left to the care of an overseer. Whatever cruelties may have been practiced upon the slaves were practiced in such cases by the overseers. Those overseers of negroes never had any social standing in the South; they were always looked upon as third or fourth rate people; they were ostracized by first-class society. And it was the same with negro traders—people who bought and sold negroes as a business. I can remember in Hamburg—a place immediately across the river from Augusta, Ga., and which was at one time a very important cotton market, and must have been an important slave market, because I do not remember to have seen places of that kind in Augusta—I remember that right on the street in Hamburg fronting on the river, there were three or four long low houses with inner piazzas, not piazzas projecting out on the walk, but recesses, and there were benches all along in those recesses, or on three sides of them, and negro men and women sitting there on those benches day after day. I do not know when I have thought of that place until now. Those were the houses of negro traders, and the negroes that sat there were for sale, and people who wanted to buy would come down and inspect them and strike a bargain if they could. Now, those negro traders, while they made money and had money, were not at all recognized in society. They and the overseers were regarded as belonging to the same class,

Names:

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



Names:

Caldwell, Dr.

Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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Mrs. WARD. I think not.

Mr. HEWITT. There were a few in South Alabama, but none in this part of the State.

Dr. CALDWELL. They were mainly in the cotton belt of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The CHAIRMAN. The statement applies, I suppose, to the sugar plantations as well as to the cotton plantations?

Dr. CALDWELL. Yes.

Mrs. WARD. Mississippi furnished more of those cases than any other of the Southern States.

Mr. HEWITT. On the plantations where the owners resided, the negroes and the whites were brought up on a par.

Mrs. BOLAND. I was born and brought up at the North, but I moved to New Orleans with my husband in 1878, and we now reside here in Birmingham. While I lived in New Orleans I saw a striking instance of attachment between a colored girl and her owner. This lady owned slaves before the war, and one of her women had a little girl which she took when it was a baby; the girl had consumption, and this lady attended to her night and day, and had the priest come and administer Holy Communion to her, and when the child died she was laid out in this lady's parlor as nicely as any white child could be; then she was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, and the lady used to visit the grave regularly, and I have gone there with her. While the child was sick her mother was sent for; but she said, "Oh, Missus, you can take care of Cora a great deal better than I can." She did come to see the child, however, before she died, and took away a great many of Cora's things.

Mrs. WARD. The affection between the whites and their black servants was very great in many instances.

Mrs. BOLAND. This lady had to bury three of her old servants. An amusing thing happened in my presence one evening. An old servant of the family came down and said to the mistress, "Oh, Missus, if you only give me \$2 the Voodoo doctor can take the evil spirit out of the sick child." She was actually going to part with her \$2 for that purpose, but the lady told her to go and tell the Voodoo doctor to cure the child first and she would give him all the money he wanted.

Mrs. WARD. Did the doctor cure the child?

Mrs. BOLAND. Oh, yes; and he got the \$2, too. The child got relieved of the evil spirit.

The CHAIRMAN. What did you see or learn of the doctor's operations?

Mrs. BOLAND. I did not see anything.

Dr. BOLAND. The negroes got together annually on the lake side and went through the ceremony of dancing around the fire until the authorities stopped them. It was on St. John's night. I remember the first night I was there and heard of it, and I made an effort to get out to see the ceremonies, but I was unable to do so. I inquired about what was going on and was told that the ceremonies had been gone through during the daytime, so I did not see them.

The CHAIRMAN. That practice is something that they brought with them from Africa, I believe, and it has survived their conversion to Christianity?

Mrs. BOLAND. Yes. The old colored people told us that the doctor would get some animal and sacrifice it and put it in a pot, and while it was boiling he would ask the Voodoo to drive out the evil spirit.

Mrs. WARD. And then the victim or his friends would have to pay the doctor.

Names:

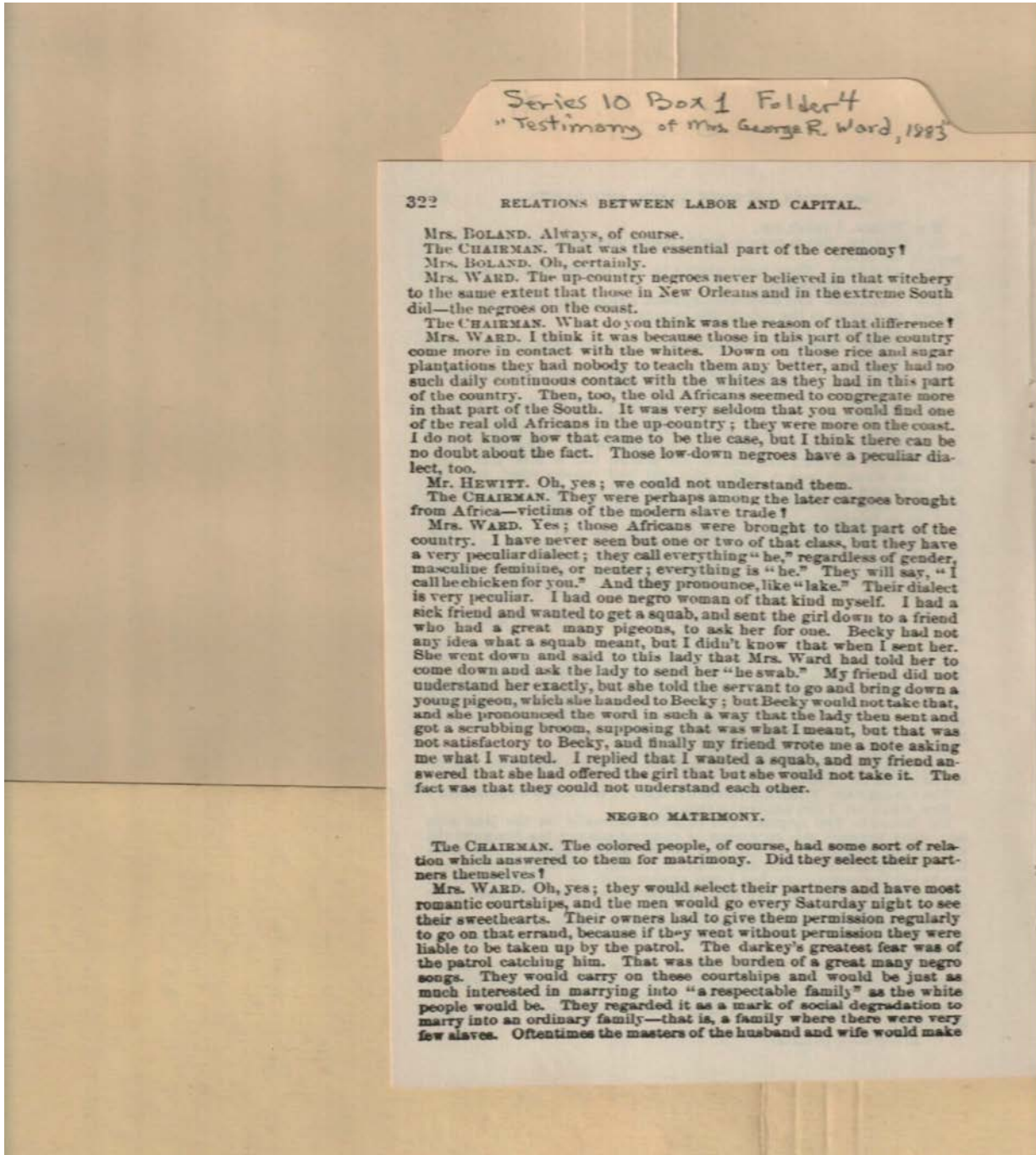
, Cora
Boland, Dr.

Boland, Mrs.
Caldwell, Dr.

Hewitt, Mr.
Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



Names:

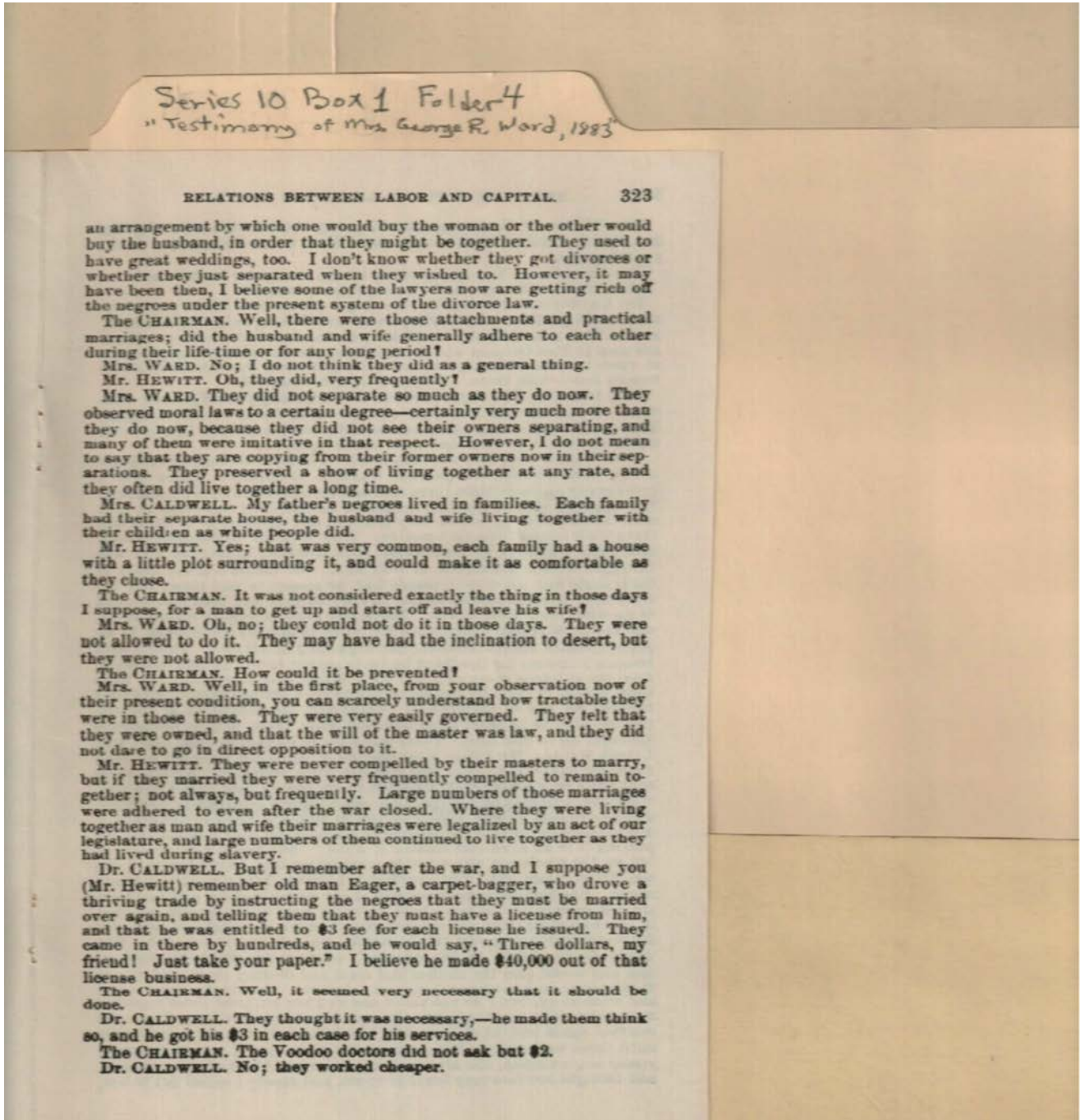
Boland, Mrs.

Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



Names:

, Eager

Caldwell, Dr.

Caldwell, Mrs.

Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony

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"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward, 1883"

Mrs. WARD. Well, the negroes will go anywhere for the sake of going in a crowd, whether it was to be married or to be divorced, or to do anything else.

The CHAIRMAN. You are speaking of the time prior to the war?

Mrs. WARD. Oh, yes; and of the present time, too.

Dr. CALDWELL. I noticed on the sugar plantations that a negro woman would go down with a fellow as his wife as long as he worked there, and as soon as he quit she would drop him and go with another. There are men in New Orleans who furnish hands for the plantations, and one of them told me the only way he could get along was by sending the women down with them. They are always "married."

Mrs. BOLAND. The negro mothers are exceedingly cruel to their children. I saw several instances of that when I was in New Orleans. They would whip them most unmercifully with a clothes line or with anything that they could get their hands upon.

Mrs. WARD. Yes, they are very cruel. I had a little negro girl bound to me while the Yankee garrison was still at Atlanta. There were a great many negro children there that had been deserted by their mothers. The negroes' idea of freedom seemed to be that they were free to quit their homes, and go where they pleased, and thousands of them did leave their homes from that motive. They went off to different places, and great numbers of them came into Atlanta; in fact the city was thronged with a population of that kind. Of course a great many of them could not get work; people had no money to pay them, and besides they were no longer willing to work as they had been accustomed to do when they were slaves. There was great mortality among them, and the little children that were left without parents were taken to an asylum, which the Government had organized in Atlanta. Then it soon became a custom for Southern ladies to go out to the asylum and select from the children there any that were bright and promising, and have them bound to them by the Government for a certain period, until they reached an age of eighteen or twenty-one, the obligation of the employer being to support them and look after them, and be responsible for them up to that time. There was a fee to be paid in each case; \$50, I think it was. My father went and got a negro girl there for me for a nurse for my infant. She was a smart little thing, but I have never seen such an innately cruel creature in my life. I said to her one day, "Martha, I think you are the most cruel thing I ever saw in my life;" and she replied, "Yes, ma'm; no use in lettin' a heap of things live. My mammy never thought nothin' of taking a cat that worried her and putting it in an oven and roastin' it alive." She was a very cruel girl, but on the whole she was a pretty good nurse, and I kept her until she was fifteen years old. She developed, however, into a most inveterate rogue. She had never been outside of our rooms to sleep, and had been treated exactly as the household servants were in slavery times—that is, she had everything she wanted, and had not the slightest necessity for stealing anything, but yet she would steal just for the fun of it. She would go to church in the evening, wearing my children's clothes, and she would tear the clothes and steal and destroy them, and throw them away; and she became a great nuisance. Eventually she married and went away, but I do not think she and her husband lived together more than three months before she quit him or he quit her. Then she married again and lived here, but I had not seen her for a long time until three weeks ago. I was out on the piazza and I saw an immense young negro woman, who attracted my attention; I looked at her closely, and thought her face very familiar to me, and finally I called out to her,

Names:

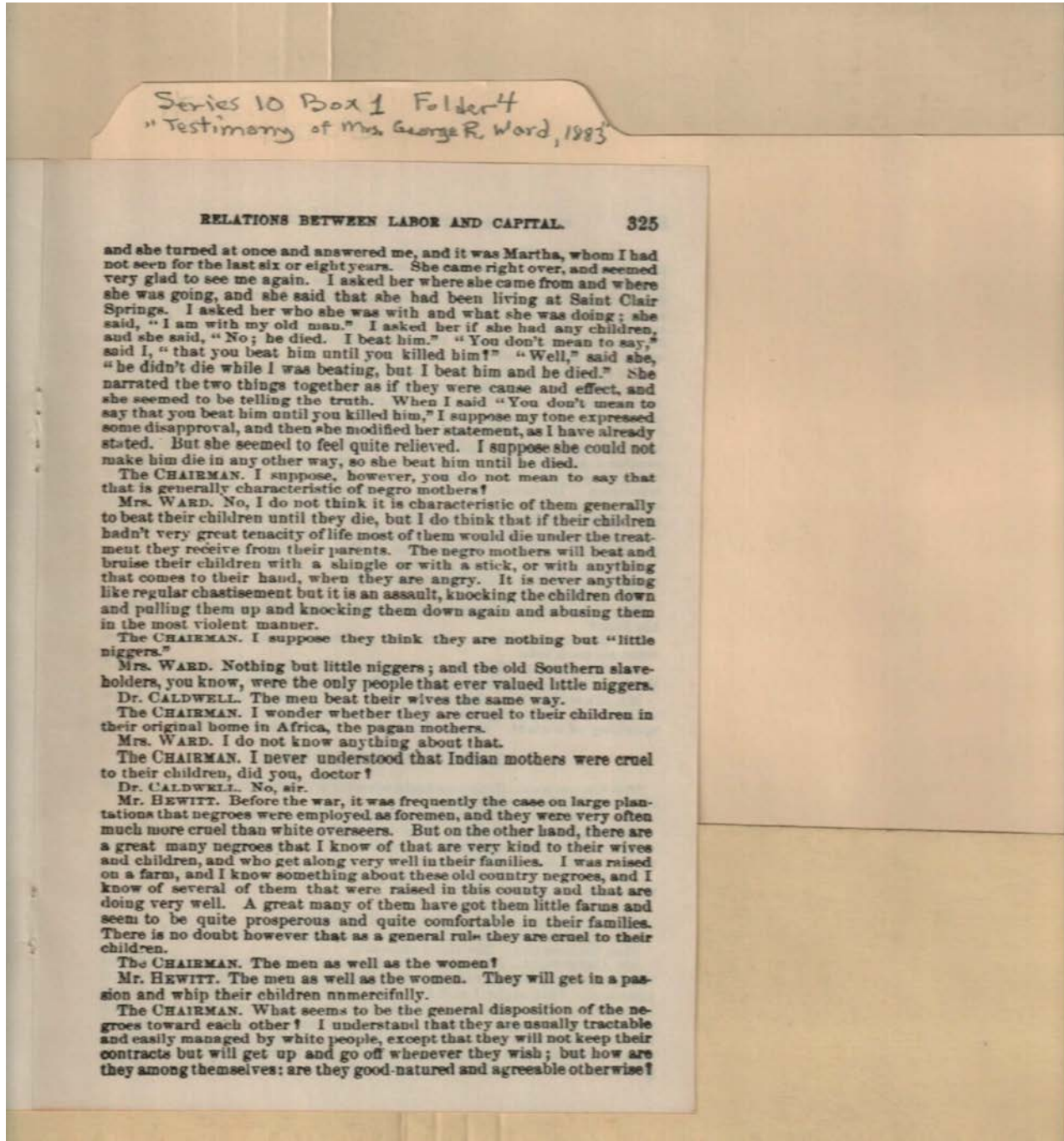
Boland, Mrs.

Caldwell, Dr.

Ward, Mrs.

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, Martha

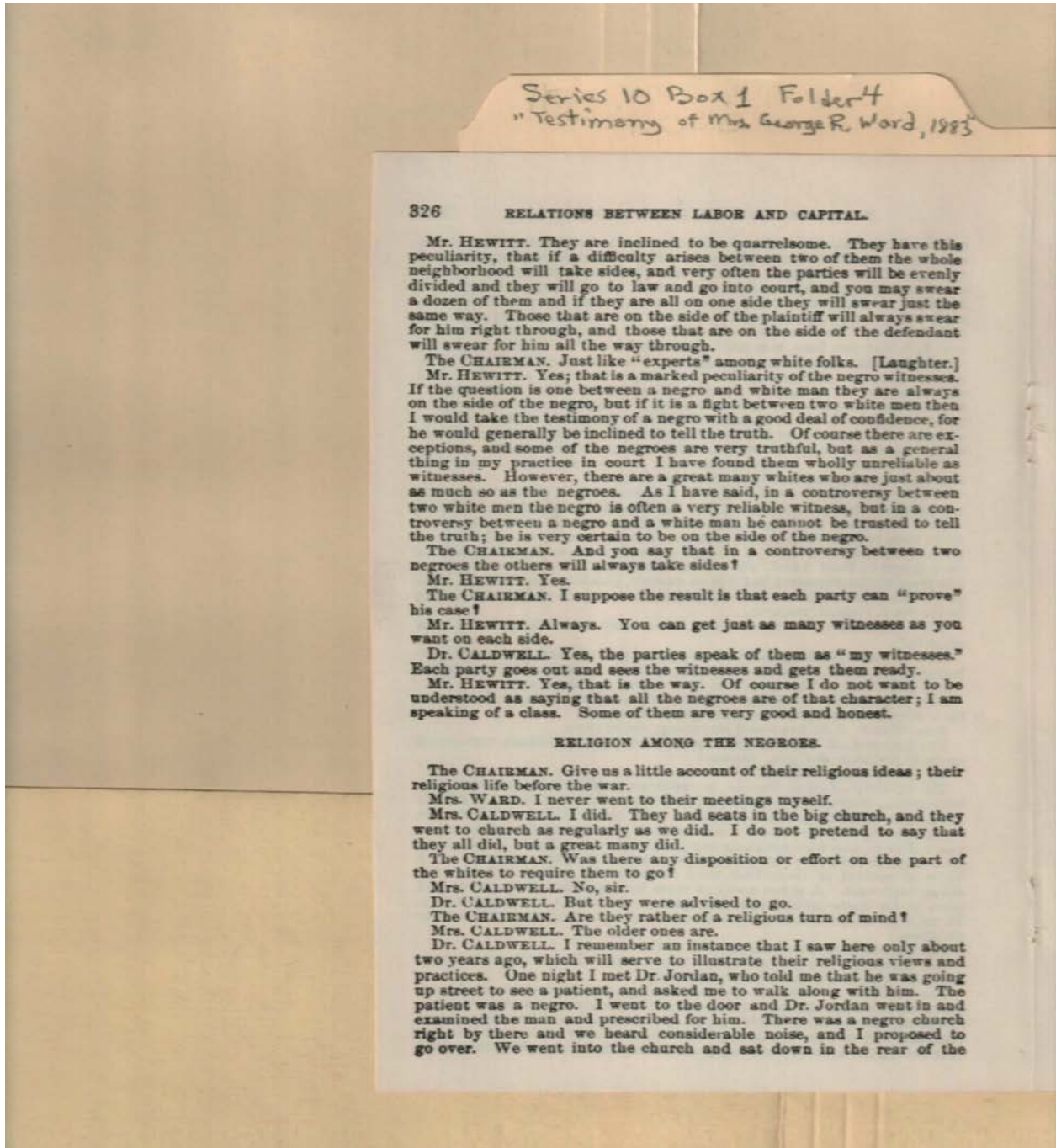
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Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



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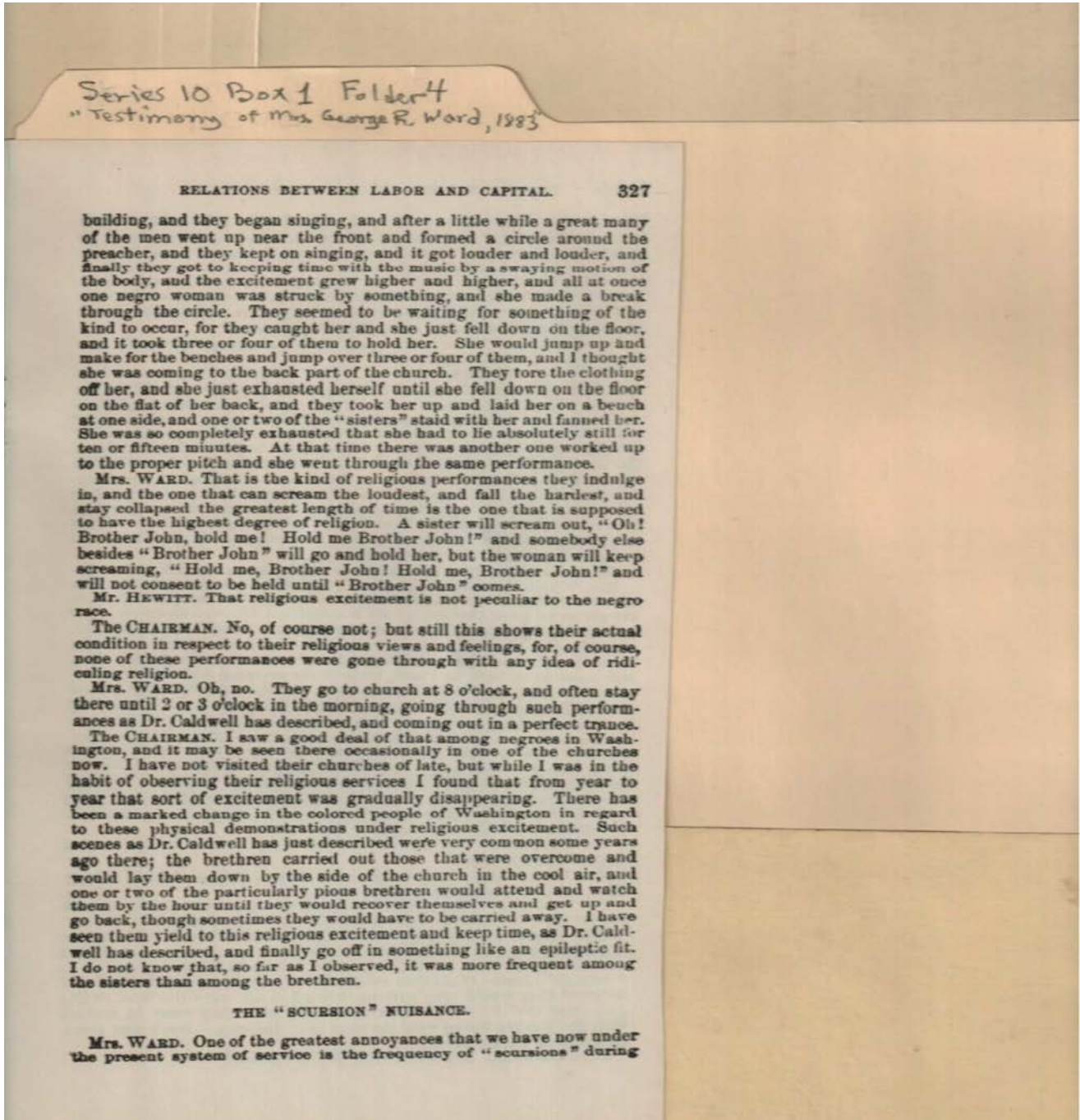
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Jordan, Dr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



Names:

, Brother John

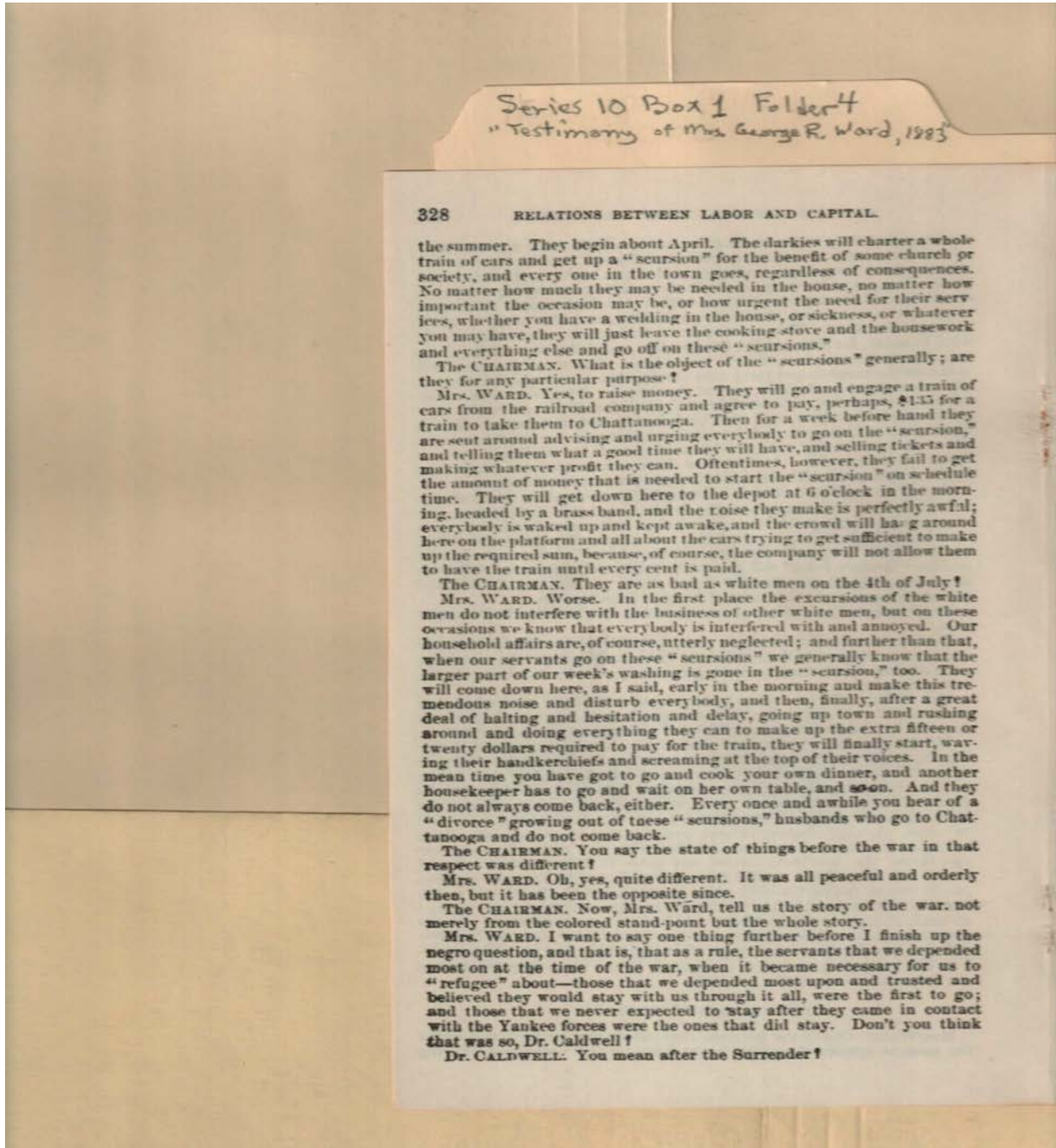
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Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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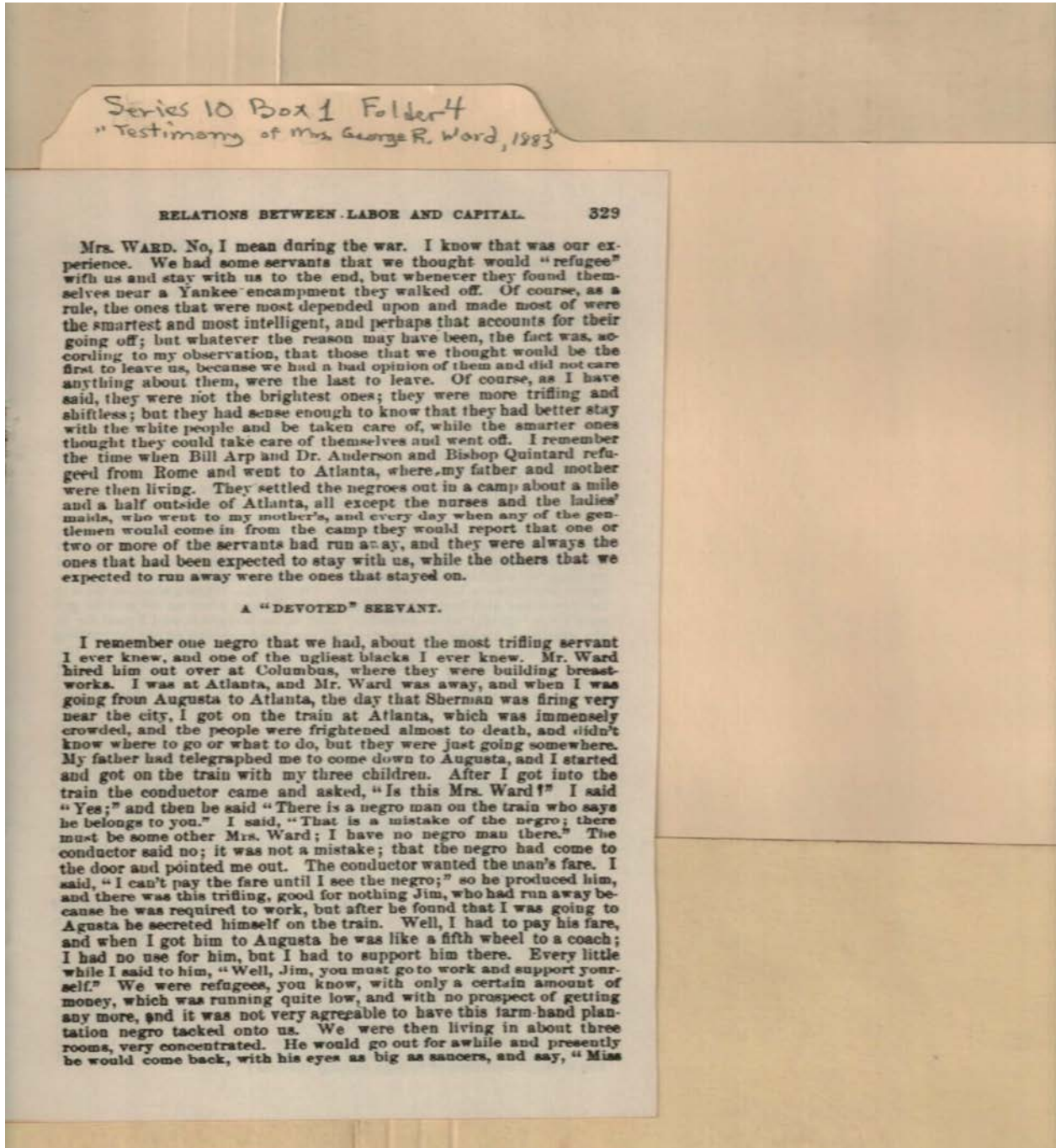
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Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



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Anderson, Dr.

Arp, Bill

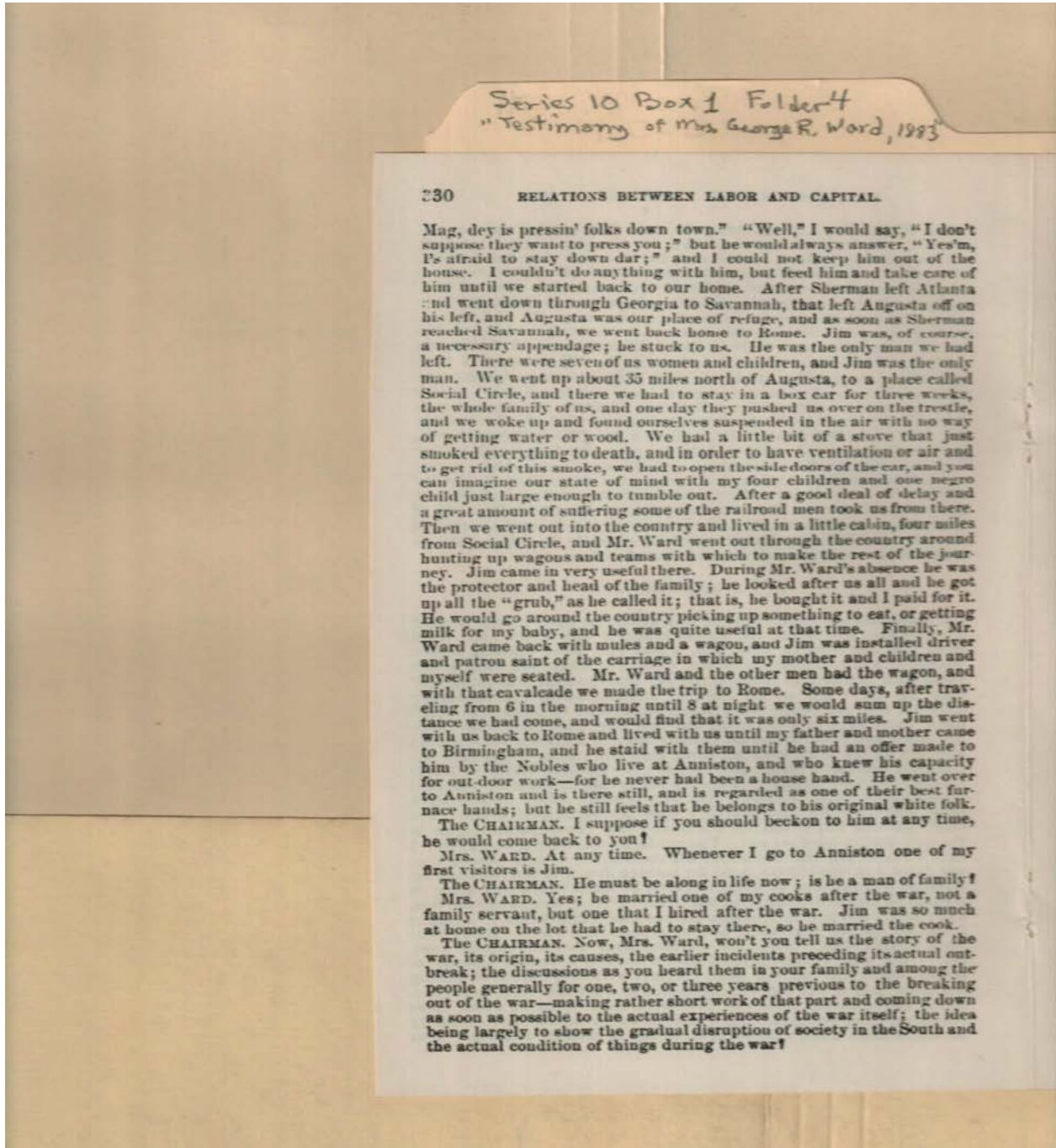
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Sherman,

Ward, Mr.

Types:

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Noble,

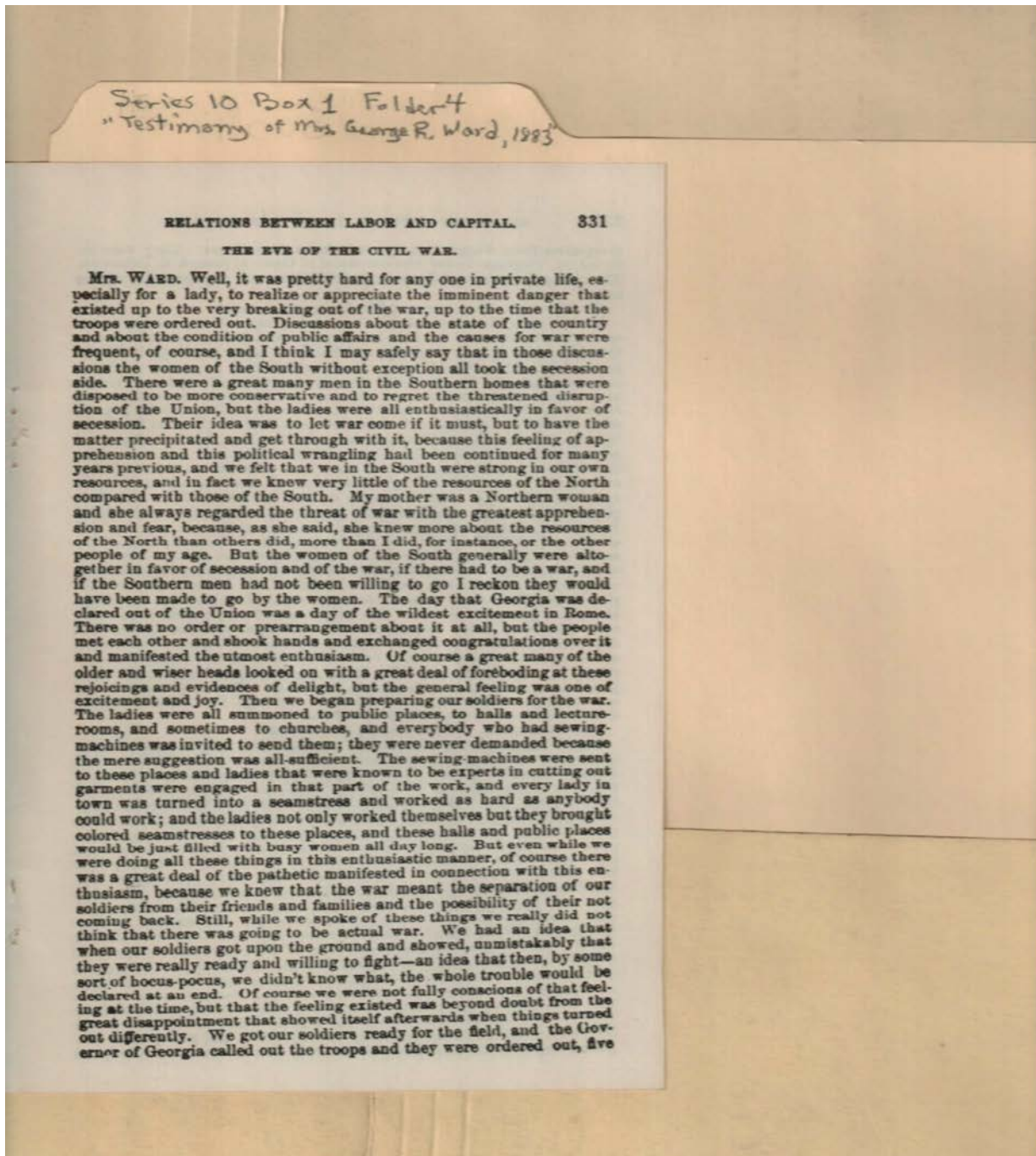
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Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

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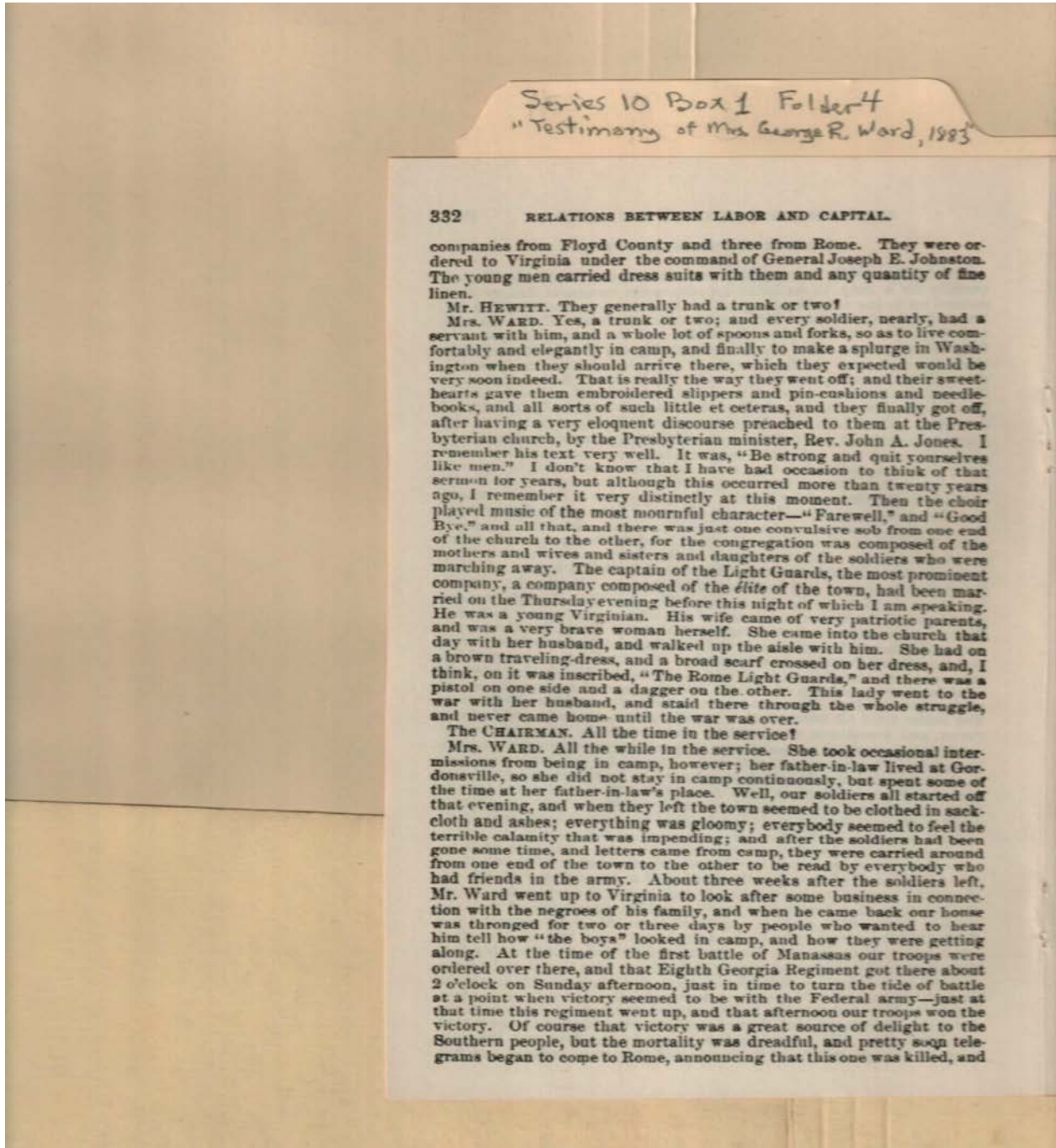


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Types:

testimony



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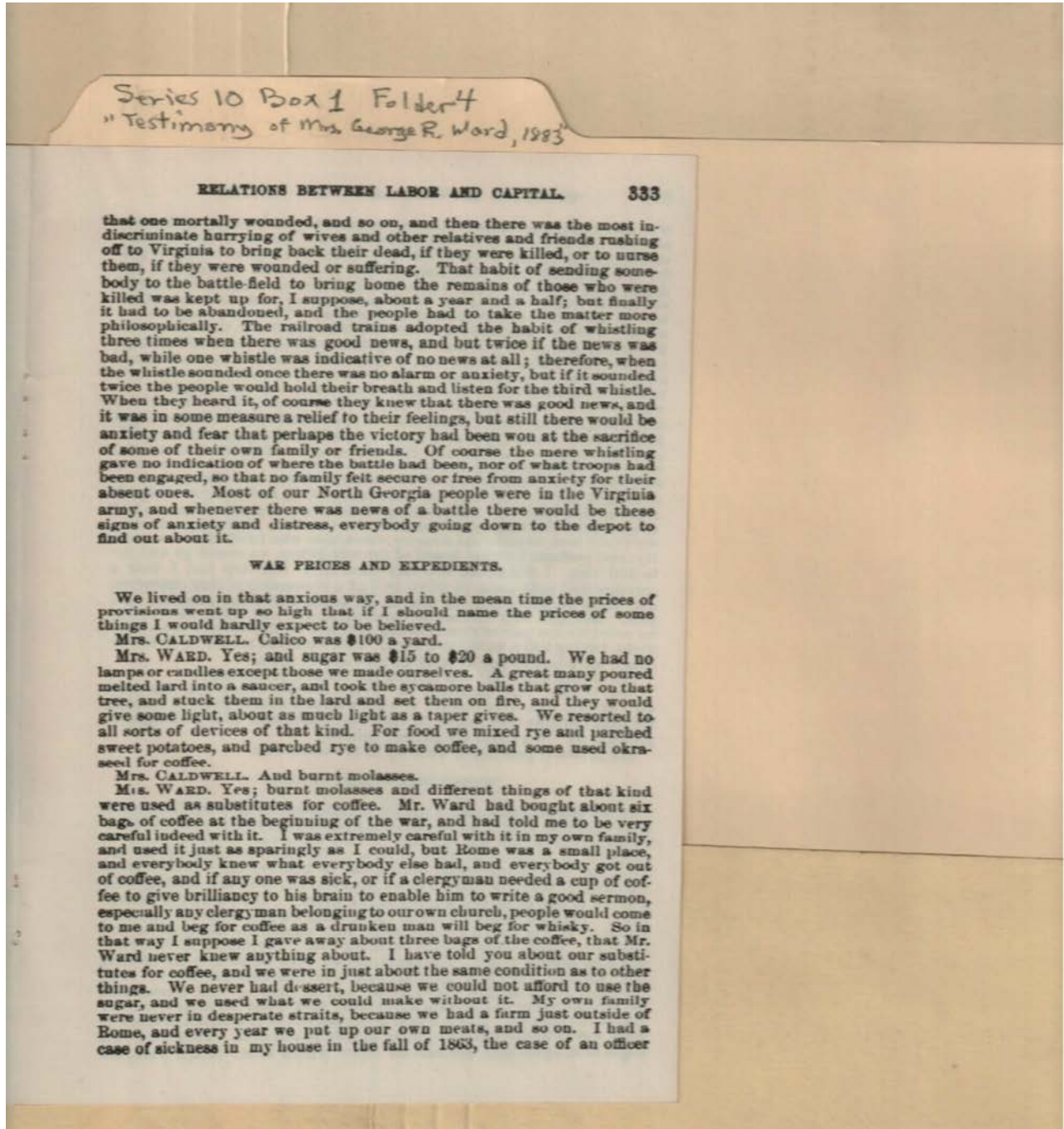
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Jones, John A., Rev.
Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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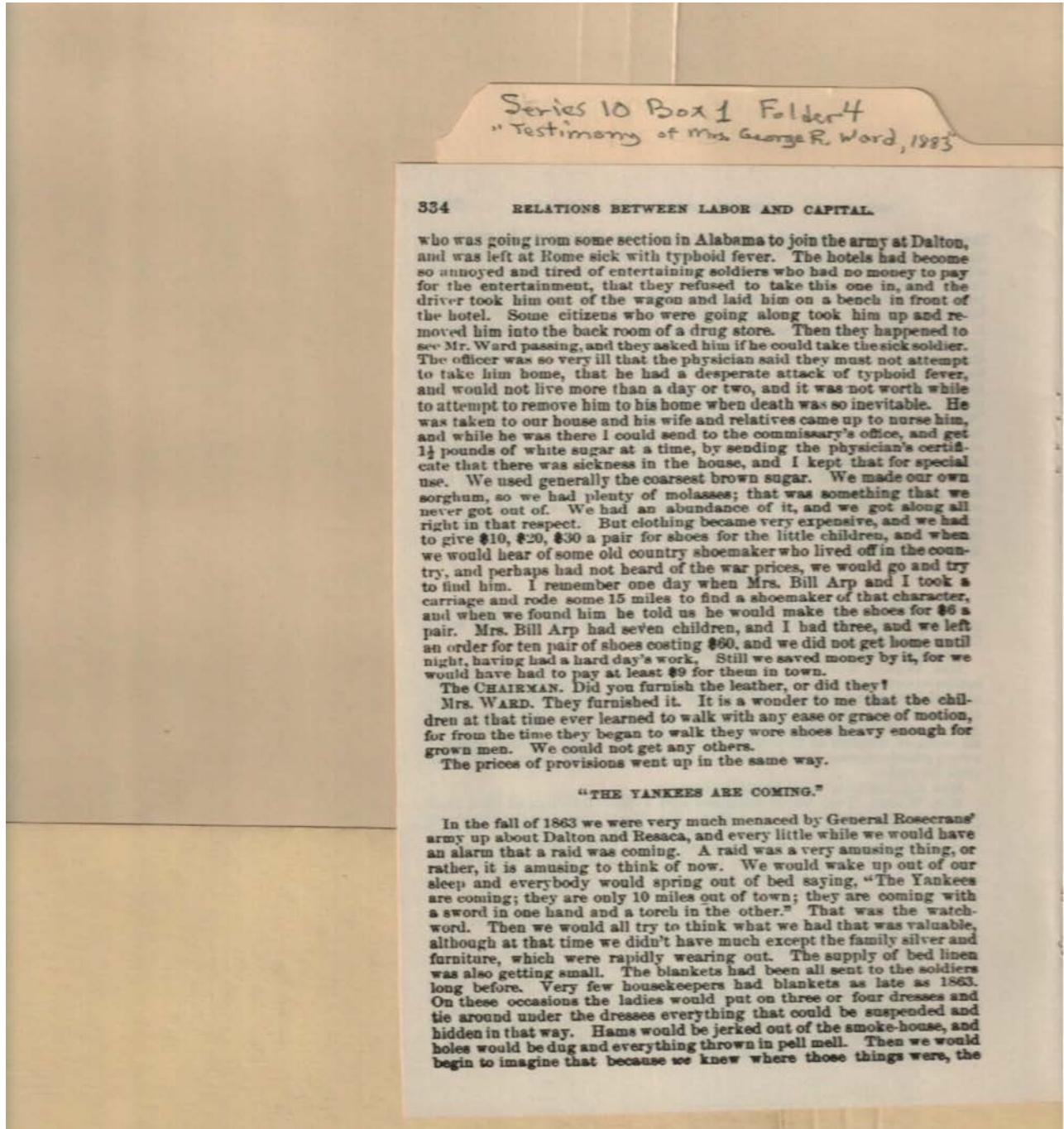
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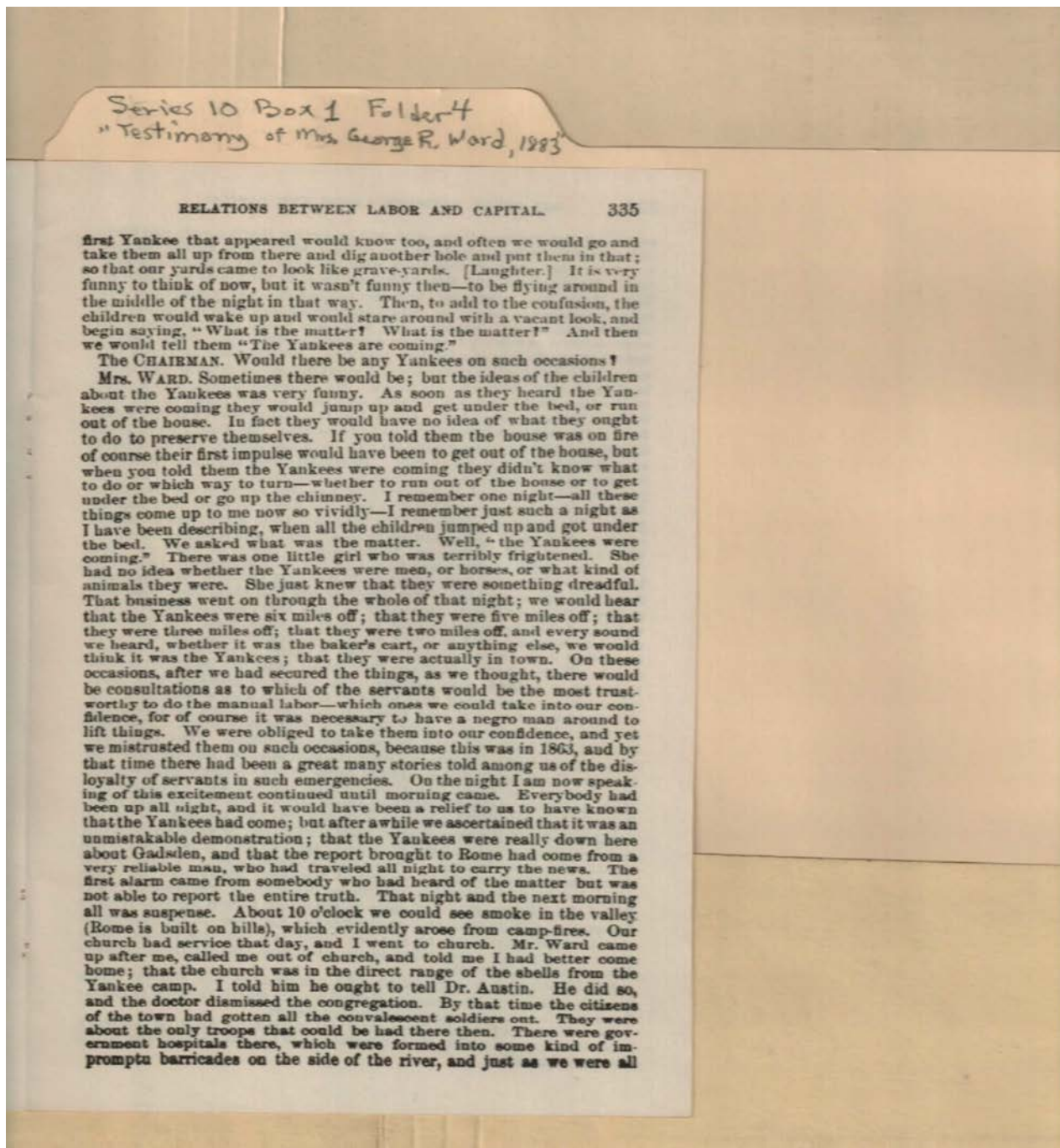
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Rosecrans, General

Ward, Mr.

Types:

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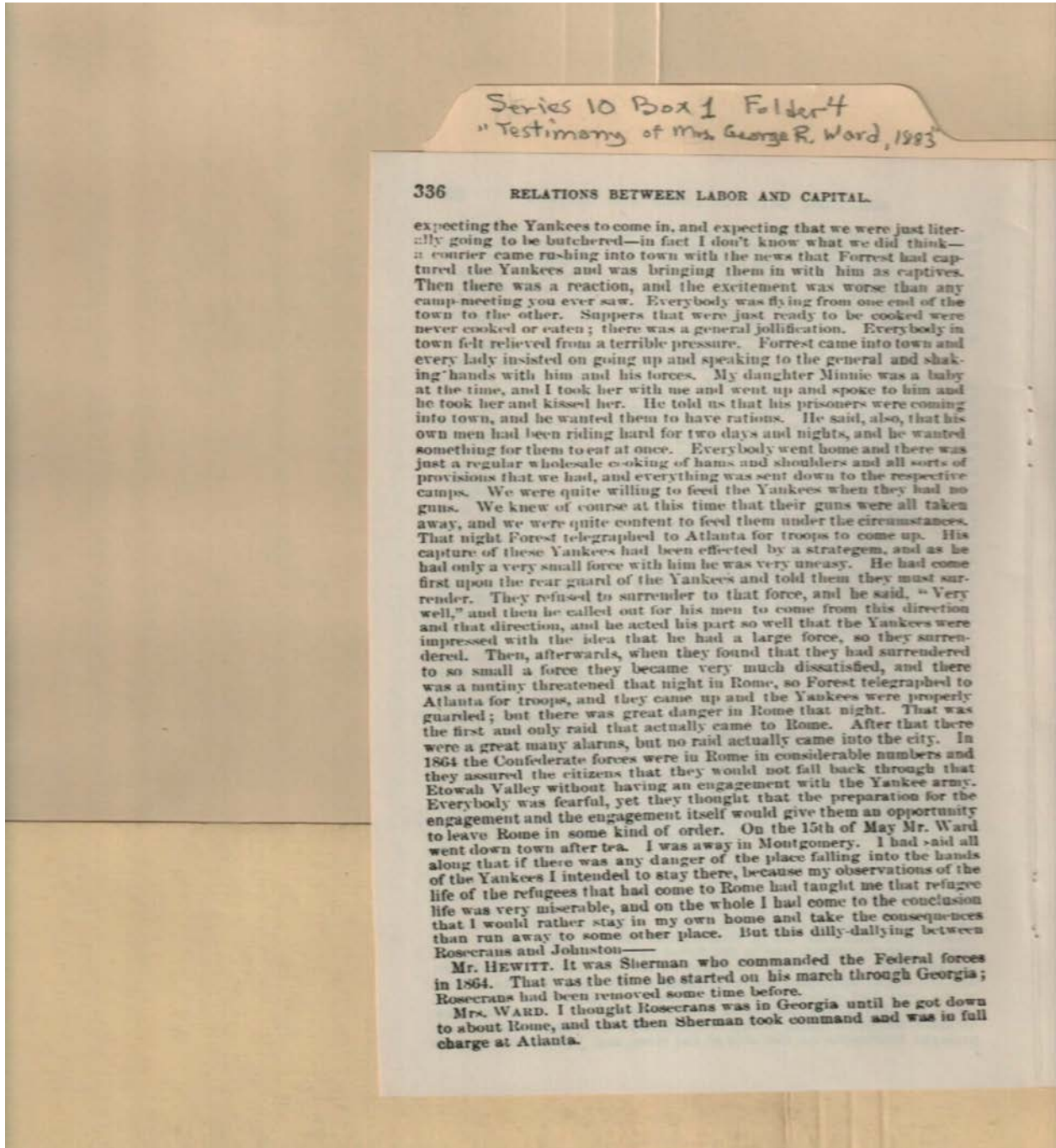
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Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

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Names:

, Minnie
Forrest,

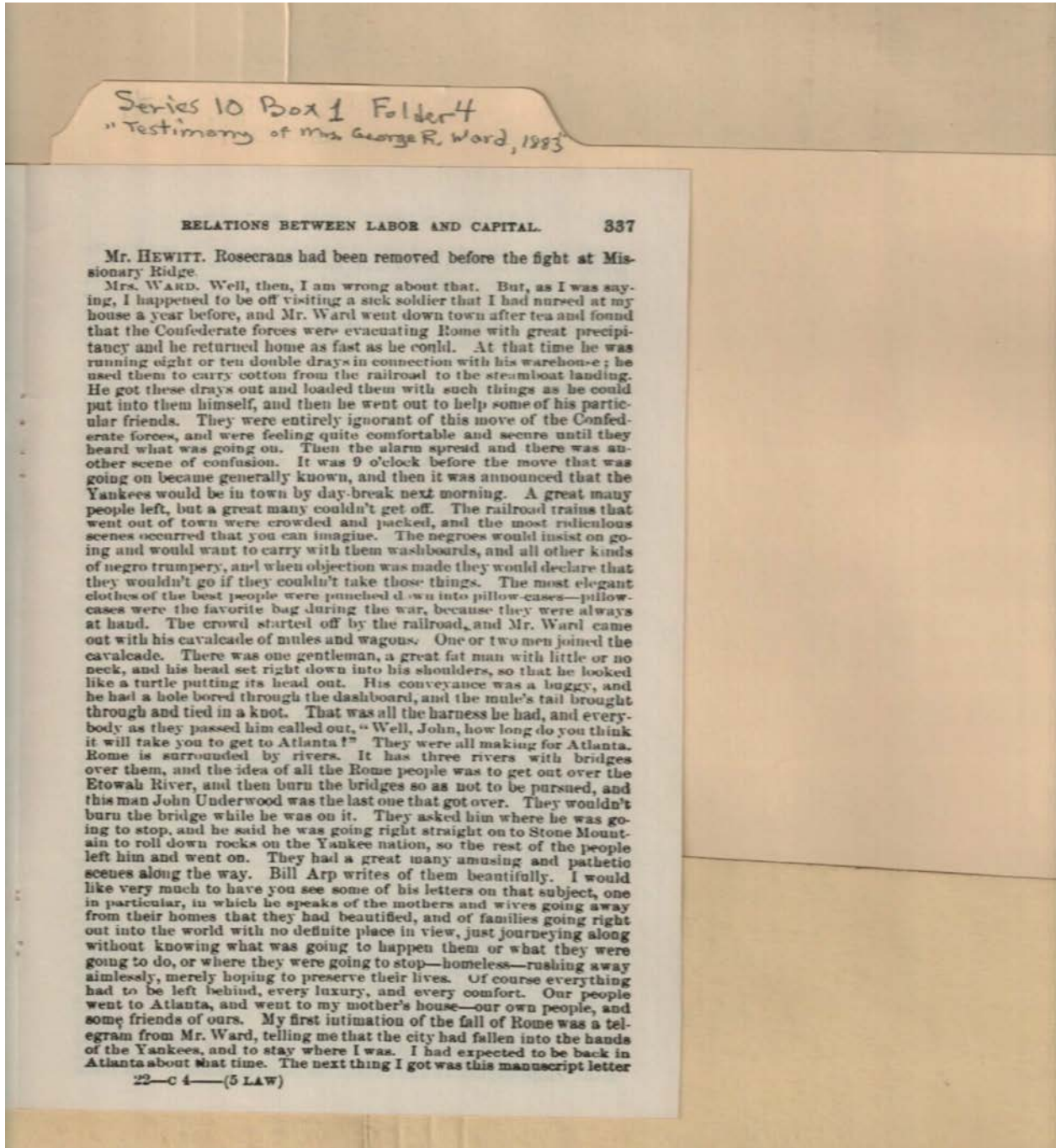
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Sherman,
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Ward, Mrs.

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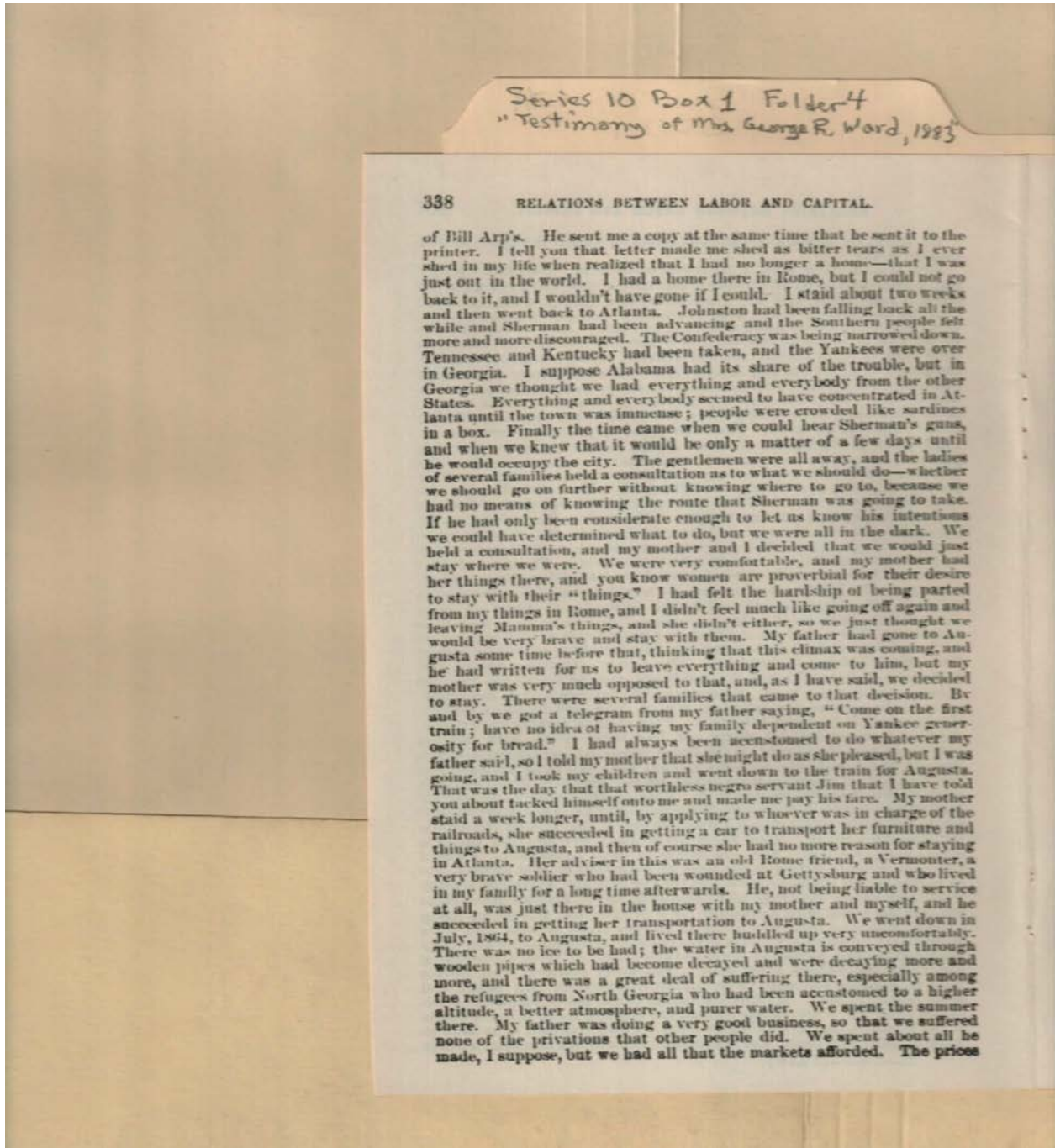
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Rosecrans,
Underwood, John

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



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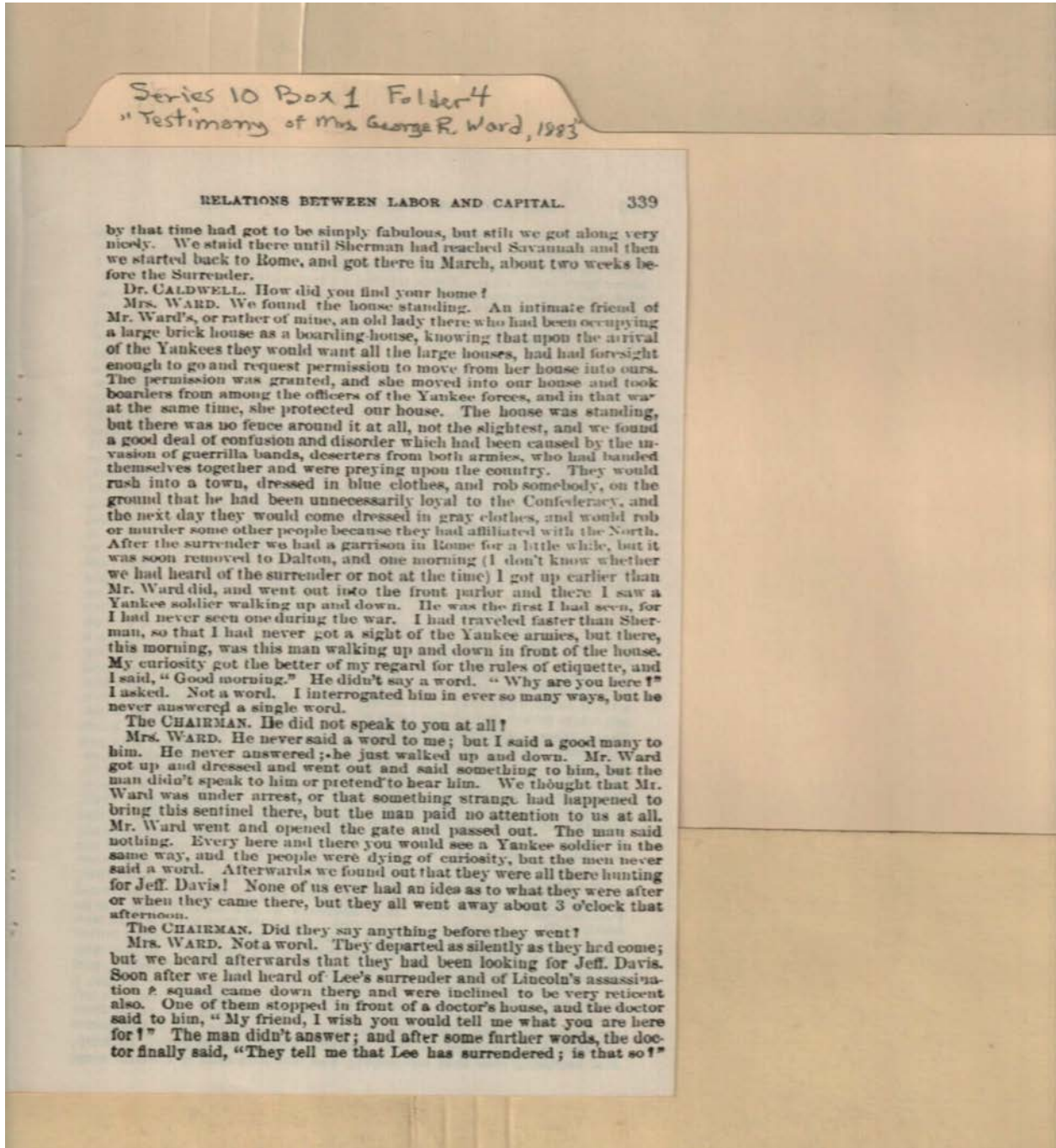
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Johnston,

Sherman,

Types:

testimony



Names:

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Davis, Jefferson

Lee,

Lincoln,

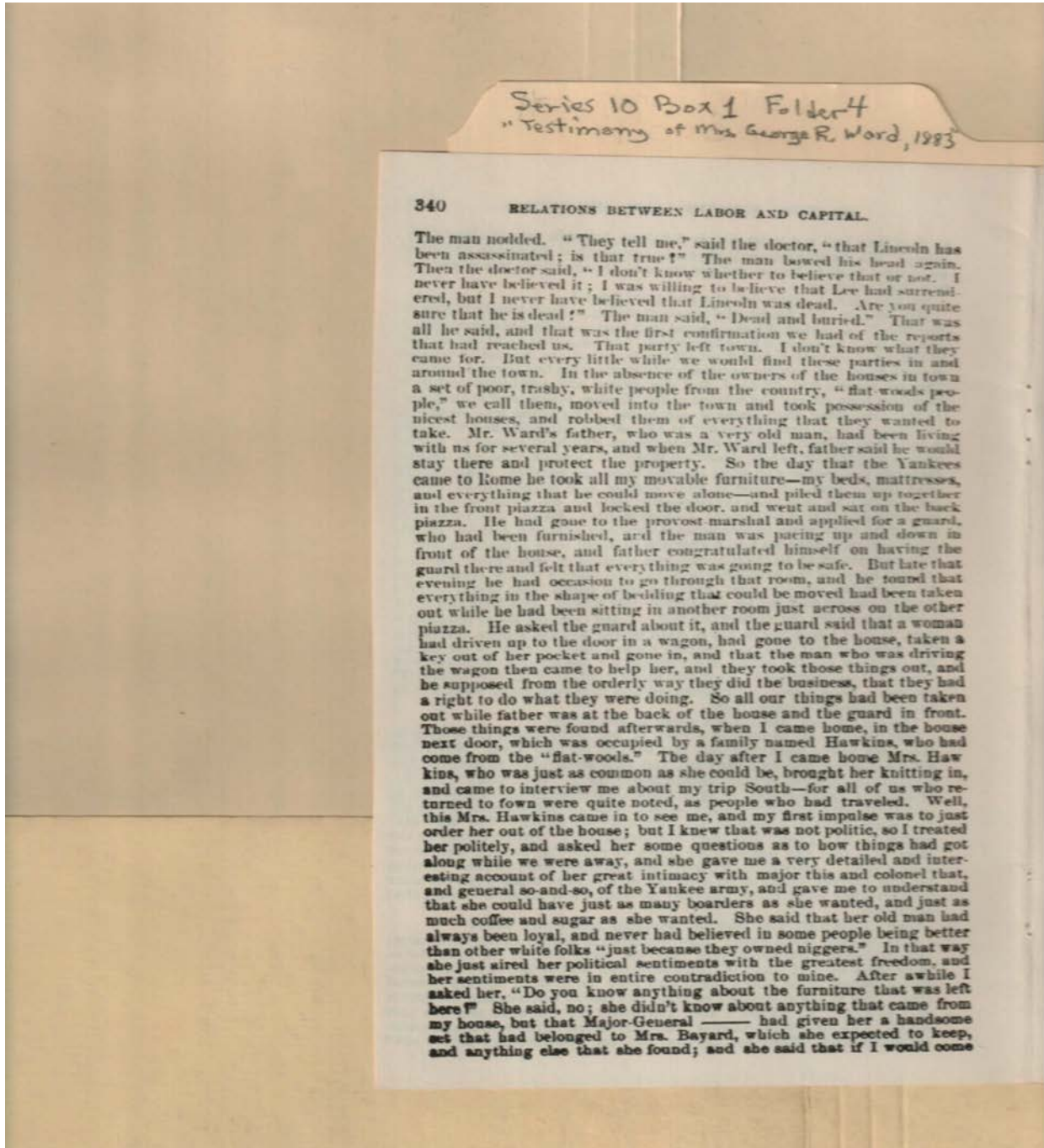
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Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



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Hawkins,

Hawkins, Mrs.

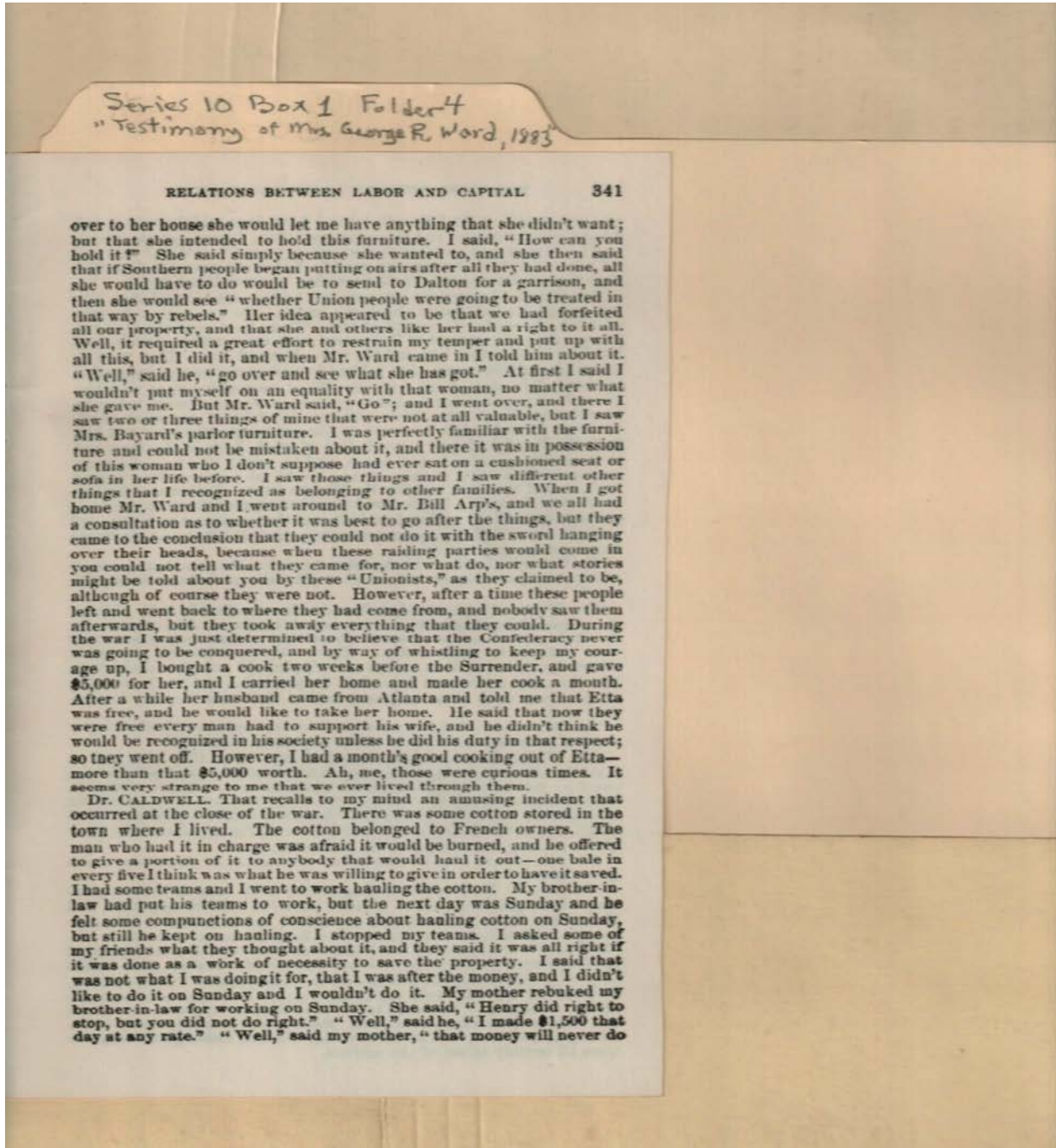
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Lincoln,

Ward, Mr.

Types:

testimony



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, Henry

Arp, Bill

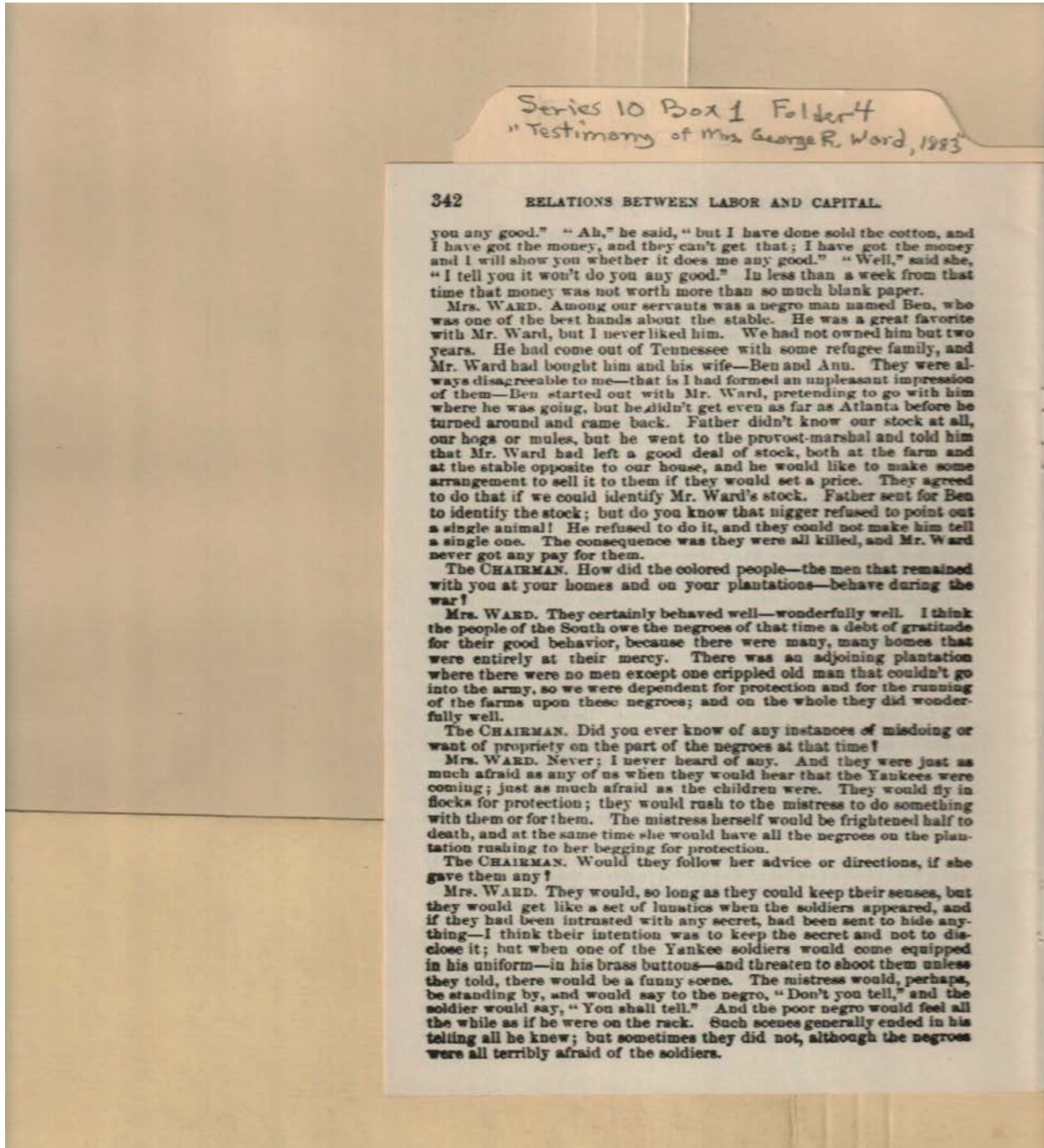
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Caldwell, Dr.

Ward, Mr.

Types:

testimony



Names:

, Ann (Slave)

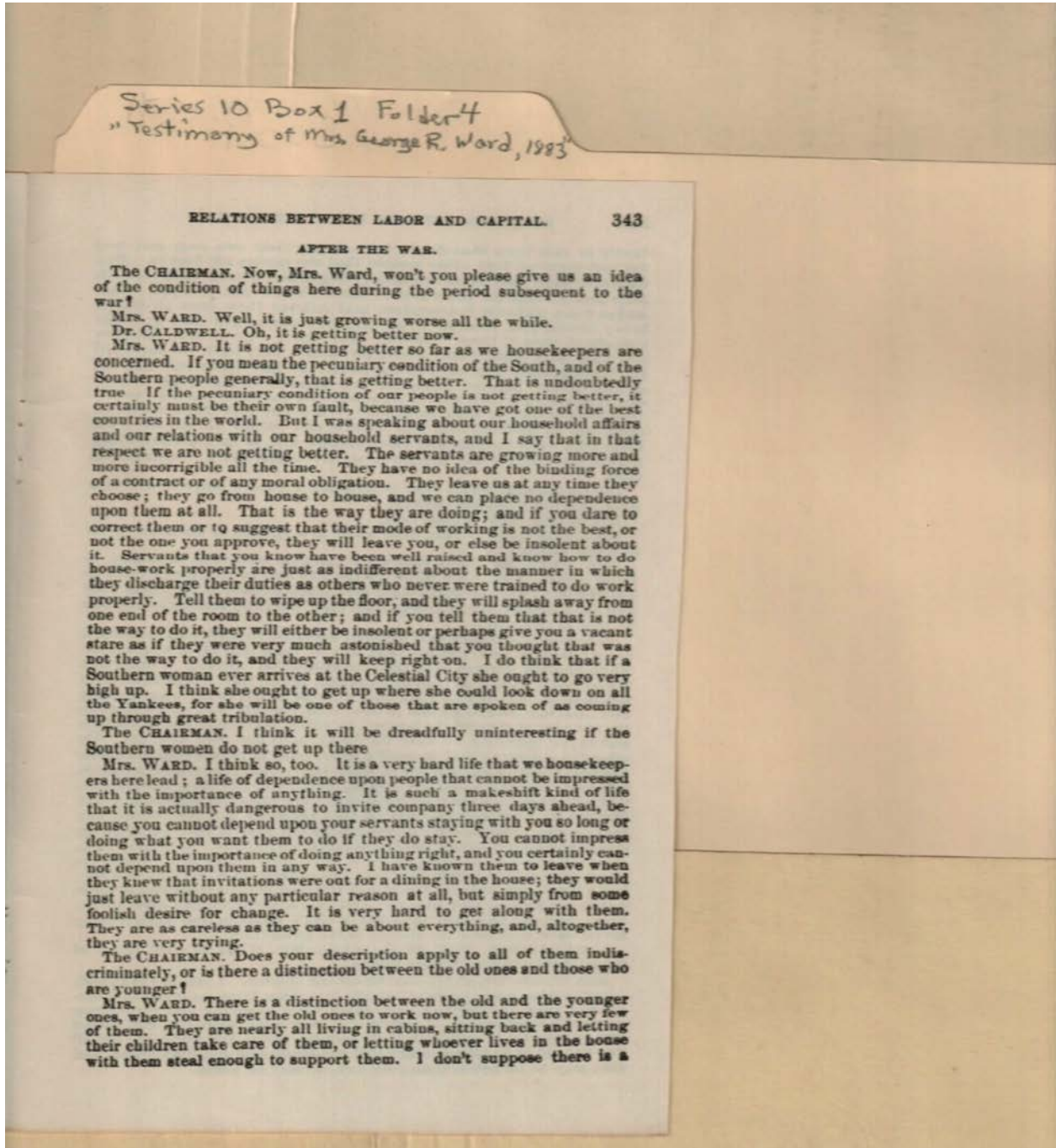
, Ben (Slave)

Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



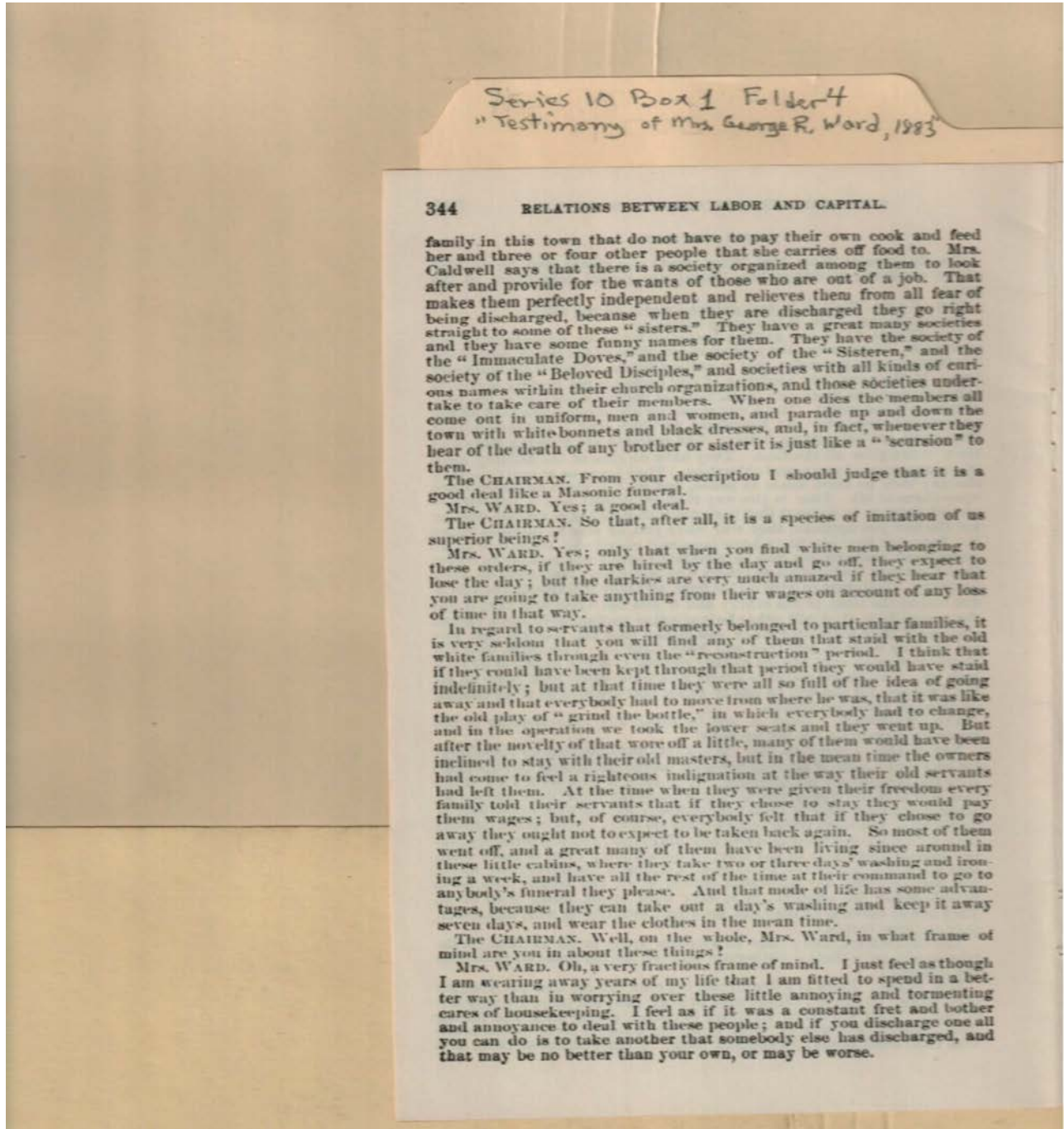
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Ward, Mrs.

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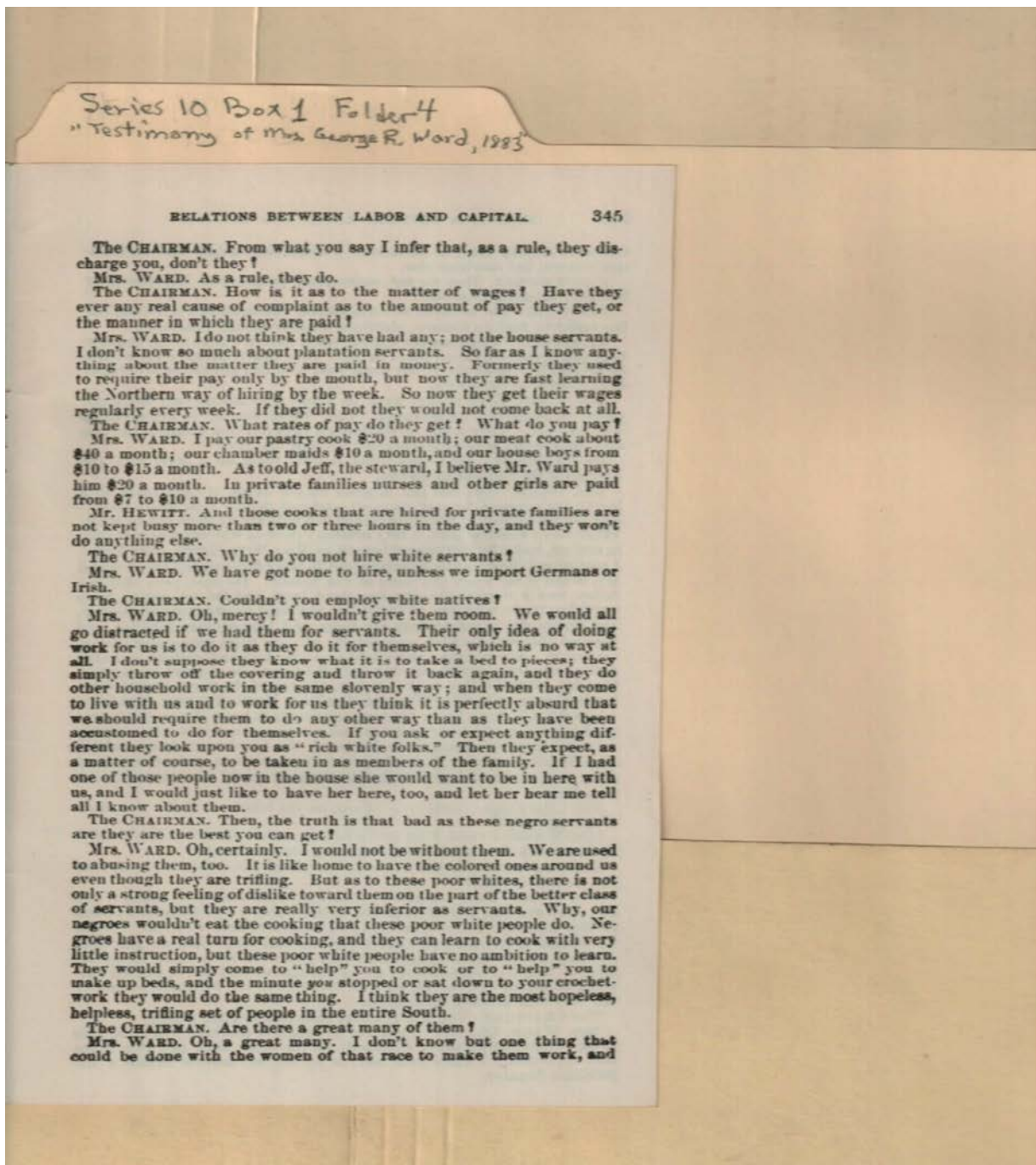
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Caldwell, Mrs.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony



Names:

, Jeff

Hewitt, Mr.

Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony

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"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward, 1883"

that is to employ them in factories. I think they might work satisfactorily there, but nowhere else.

The CHAIRMAN. They do not accumulate property or improve their homes, I suppose, as a rule?

Mrs. WARD. The majority of them do not. Occasionally a few do, but the majority lead an aimless, shiftless, hand-to-mouth existence.

Mr. HEWITT. There are not a great many native whites in the country that you could get for servants at all. They nearly all have their little farms and live upon them, but those that you can get are as trifling as Mrs. Ward has described.

Mrs. WARD. Even if they have no homes they are so very much opposed to going out as servants. They think service is synonymous with slavery. They make no distinction between free domestic service and compulsory servitude—regular old time slavery.

Dr. CALDWELL. Yes; they think it puts them on a level with the negroes if they go out to service.

Mrs. WARD. Yes; but the negroes do not think it puts them on a level; the negroes despise them all, and call them "poor white trash," and say all manner of insulting things not only about them but to them. There was a white woman, a very ordinary person, who came here to take in sewing, and who introduced herself as Miss Mary Morris, from Rome. I recognized the name as belonging out in the "flat woods," and I asked Mr. Ward if he knew anything of the family. He said, yes; that her father was a regular old drunken dead beat, and for me not to have anything to do with any of them, but she kept on coming and coming, and finally she came up into my room and became very familiar, and ignored observations that even people of very little refinement pay attention to. For instance, she would open the door and walk in, and altogether, she was very presuming until it came to be a great annoyance. One day I heard a fuss in the kitchen, and one of the negro women came lumbering up and said: "That old Miss Mary Morris, the poor short-hand white folks, is down in the kitchen, and wants to know if you didn't save no chicken-pie, and I ain't goin' to cook nowhere where any white woman is 'lowed to prow round in the kitchen." So I had to go down and tell Miss Morris that after that whenever she wanted to see me, she must come to the door and ring the bell as anybody would who wanted to call on a lady.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, Mrs. Ward, on the whole what do you think of the situation?

Mrs. WARD. I think I am going to try to make myself as comfortable as I can with the darkies under existing circumstances.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you blame us Northern folks for it all, or how do you feel about that?

Mrs. WARD. Yes; I blame you for a great deal of it. I think if you had staid at home and let us go out of the Union we would have avoided all this trouble. I don't see what you wanted to keep us in for. When we wanted to go out you wouldn't let us, and then when we got back you kept all the time dinging and dinging at us as if to make us go out again. You "reconstructed" us as though we had never known anything at all, and as though we were indebted to the Northern people for the very first ideas of civilization.

The CHAIRMAN. You will get over that feeling after awhile.

Mrs. WARD. Oh, yes. You have no idea how soothing it is to be able to say what you please to somebody on the other side, and this is the first opportunity I have ever had to air my sentiments before a Republican Senator.

Names:

Caldwell, Dr.

Hewitt, Mr.

Morris, Mary, Miss

Ward, Mr.

Ward, Mrs.

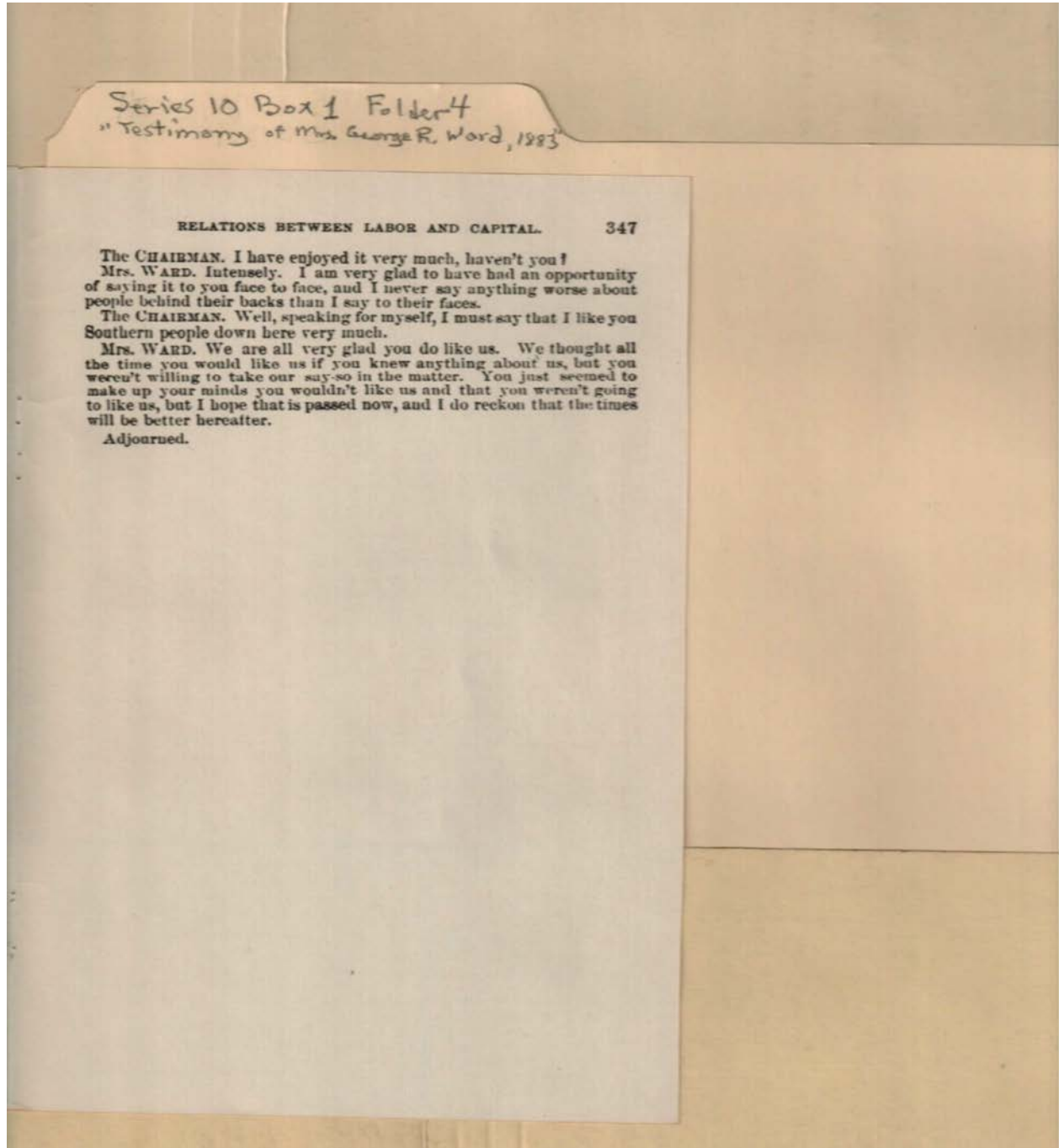
Types:

testimony

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"Testimony of Mrs. George R. Ward," 1883

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Ward, Mrs.

Types:

testimony

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Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

Preferred Citation: Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

Collection Scope and Content: The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions: None

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