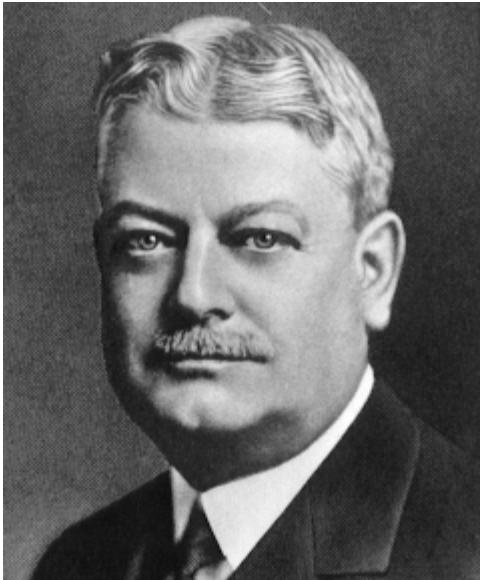


# COLORADO GOVERNORS

## William E. Sweet



### Scope and Content Note

The Governor William E. Sweet collection comprises approximately 32 cubic feet of material spanning his term as governor from 1923-1925. Record series in the collection include the Executive Record; correspondence; reports; speeches and messages; extraditions and requisitions; and proclamations and appointments. The materials date essentially from 1923-1925, although there are a few items that precede and post date the official term. The physical condition of the collection is generally good.

### Biography

William Ellery Sweet was born in Chicago on January 27, 1869, the son of Channing and Emeroy L. (Stevens) Sweet, both natives of Canada. He came from a long line of New

England forebears, all of whom had immigrated previous to 1700. His family had its roots primarily in New York and the province of Quebec in Canada. Mr. Sweet's father and grandfather came to the United States seeking better opportunities, and after a short stay in Chicago, moved to Colorado Springs in 1872 when William was only two years of age. He attended the public schools there and after graduating from high school, received his A.B. Degree at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania in 1890.

Two years later, he married Joyeuse L. Fullerton in Philadelphia on October 19, 1892, and to them were born four children: Lennig, Channing, William E. Jr., and Joyeuse Elise. They returned to Colorado and Mr. Sweet founded an investment banking firm in Denver. This endeavor allowed him to become wealthy early in his career and enabled him to retire in 1920. He gave liberally of his earnings to philanthropic and humanitarian enterprises. Active in the development of the Y.M.C.A. movement in Colorado, Sweet gave one-fifth of his money toward the construction of the Denver Y.M.C.A. building. He was president of the Denver chapter for twenty two years and served as a district director in France. After the First World War, he traveled extensively in Europe and devoted a considerable amount of time in Czechoslovakia. Sweet was a leader in the affairs of the Congregational Church and held several, high national offices in its administrative functions.

William E. Sweet also developed the keen interest in politics that he inherited from his father, Channing, who was a leading Socialist in Colorado and the West. His father had been a candidate for various state offices on the Socialist ticket. In his own right, William became active in Democratic Party politics in 1922 when he was elected governor through the strong support of the labor and farm elements. He served from 1923 to 1925. While he sought re-election two years later, he was defeated by Clarence J. Morley, the Republican nominee. Sweet attributed his defeat to his opposition of the Ku Klux Klan, which was a

major force in Colorado politics at that time and supported Clarence Morley. Sweet also made two unsuccessful bids for the United States Senate in 1926 and 1936.

Governor Sweet's administration, like the two before him, was not marked by anything particularly unusual, and the affairs of office went along smoothly during his term. His election had been secured by appealing to three major voting blocks: farmers, suffering from price declines after World War I; organized labor, seeking reform of the economic system through political influence; and middle-class Progressives who had supported either Theodore Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson as spokesmen for change. As a result of a campaign promise to organized labor, the Colorado Rangers, a state police organization, was abolished during Sweet's term. The Rangers were a military force that had often been used to break up strikes and break the heads of union organizers.

Sweet's progressive political vision was also apparent when, on March 25, 1923, Senator Samuel D. Nicholson died in office and Sweet appointed Alva B. Adams to replace him. Both men shared similar political viewpoints: opposition to child labor; that state intervention was a necessity under the new conditions of industry and society; support of the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively; prohibition; support for farmers; and approval of the World Court and the League of Nations.

During Sweet's administration, however, the cracks in the progressive alliance were already visible. In the election of 1924, those cracks widened into gaping holes, stimulated in part by the formation of two Progressive parties in the state both supporting Robert M. LaFollette for president, but divided over whether to back Sweet and the Democrats on the state level or to nominate a separate slate of candidates. Sweet was caught between the breakdown of his progressive coalition and the emerging political power of the Klan. With internal factionalism rampant among the reformers themselves and the failure to attract new voters to the Sweet coalition, and the Republican victory in 1924, Colorado progressivism suffered a demise, if not actual death.

Despite his long connection with the Democratic Party, Sweet refused to support Alfred E. Smith, the party's nominee for president in 1928, and swung his aid over to Hoover. He took this position because of his lifelong support of prohibition. With the advent of the New Deal, however, Sweet became an ardent disciple of the Roosevelt administration and went to Washington in 1933 to become a public relations officer, first for the National Recovery Administration and later for the Resettlement Administration.

The last year of his life, Sweet traveled 14,000 miles and delivered fifty addresses for the Congregational Christian Church. He died on May 9, 1942 in Denver and is buried there at Fairmont Cemetery.

## **Bibliography - William E. Sweet**

### **Books and Monographs**

- Greenbaum, Fred. *Fighting Progressive: A Biography of Edward P. Costigan*. Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1971.
- Hafen, Le Roy R. *Colorado and Its People*. New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1927.
- Keating, Edward. *The Gentleman from Colorado*. Denver, Co.: Sage Books, 1964.
- Knautz, Harlan E. *The Colorado Progressive Party of 1912*. Denver, Co.: University of Denver, Unpublished Masters Thesis, 1964.

- Sweet, Channing F. A Princeton Cowboy. Colorado Springs, Co.: Denton-Berkland Printing Co., 1967.
- Sweet, William E. The Businessman and His 'Overflow'. New York: Association Press, 1919.
- Williams, Wayne. Sweet of Colorado. New York, Association Press, 1943.

### **Periodicals**

- Bayard, Charles J. "The Colorado Progressive Republican Split of 1912," Colorado Magazine, Vol. 45, Winter, 1968, pp. 61-78.
- Livigten, John C. "Governor William Sweet: Persistent Progressivism vs. Pragmatic Politics," The Colorado Magazine, Vol. 54, No 1, Winter, 1977, pp. 1-26.
- Denver Post, May 10, 1942.
- Rocky Mountain News, May 10, 1942.

### **Manuscript Collections**

- William E. Sweet Collection. Denver, Co.: Colorado State Archives.
- William E. Sweet Collection. Denver, Co.: Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

### **Series Descriptions**

#### **Executive Record**

The Executive Record contains executive orders; appointments; legislative messages; pardons; extraditions and requisitions; honorary citations; and proclamations which were issued by Governor Sweet during his term of office from 1923-1925.

#### **Correspondence**

Included in this series is correspondence between Governor Sweet and his constituents, state agencies, and other public officials. The correspondence is organized generally by subject. There is specific correspondence concerning Mexican relations, "Negro" problems , railroads, and much on various departments in state government.

#### **Speeches and Messages**

Sweet's Inaugural Address, "The Governor, The Criminal and the Court," Governor's addresses, and "Submitting Bill for New Administrative Code" comprise this series.

#### **Proclamations**

This series consists of Executive Proclamations issued by the governor and deposited as filings in the Office of the Secretary of State.

## **Reports**

This series consists primarily of reports from state agencies.

## **Extraditions and Requisitions**

This series includes documentation concerning the surrendering of alleged criminals to a different jurisdiction for trial. Documentation may include the application for extradition, the warrant for arrest, and correspondence from the Attorney General's office concerning the extradition.