

Governor Edward M. McCook

1868-1907
.25 linear feet

Ms. 408

Abstract

Born in Steubenville, Ohio Edward M. McCook was the son of Dr. John and Catherine Julia Sheldon McCook. Edward McCook relocated to Kansas, where he served in the territorial legislature. During the Civil War he attained the rank of Brigadier General in the Union Army. Following the close of hostilities he was twice appointed Governor of Colorado Territory. The Collection contains correspondence, a program and an issue of the *Denver Record*.

Background Note

Edward Moody McCook, member of the Kansas legislature, Brigadier general during the Civil War, and territorial governor of Colorado, was born in Steubenville, Ohio, on June 15, 1833, the son of Dr. John and Catherine Julia (Sheldon) McCook.

McCook received his education in public schools at Steubenville. At the age of sixteen he relocated to Minnesota, remaining here until 1859 when he followed the gold rush to Gregory Gulch. Shortly after his arrival in Gilpin County McCook opened up a law practice and engaged in mining. In 1860, when Colorado was still referred to as Jefferson Territory, McCook was elected a delegate to the legislature.

With the outbreak of the Civil War and the attack on Sumter, McCook headed back to Washington. He joined the "Kansas Legion," a command in Washington loyal to the government. Part of his duties were to protect the White House and President Lincoln. McCook earned himself a gallant record during the years of civil strife. He entered the army as a second lieutenant, First United States Cavalry, on May 8, 1861, and after numerous promotions ended his career in the regular army as a Brigadier general, McCook officially resigned from the regular army in May 1866.

Shortly after his resignation from the army, McCook was appointed minister to the Hawaiian islands. He served as minister until 1869 at which time he was appointed by President Grant to succeed Alexander C. Hunt as the territorial governor of Colorado. While governor, McCook strengthened the public school system, established a board of immigration, called for the continued construction of railroads, identified with the organization of the Denver Water Works, and advocated for women's suffrage.

During his first term as territorial governor McCook alienated a large part of the political community. He was accused of political intrigue and partisan politics. Members of the political community found him guilty of favoritism in his appointment of his brother-in-law, James B. Thompson, as the governor's private

secretary, the auditor of public accounts and a special agent to the Utes. McCook and Thompson were also accused of using their public office to enhance their private welfare. Anti-McCook people claimed the two men had made a \$22,000 net profit on a cattle transaction between themselves and the Utes. The growing distrust and dislike for McCook, Thompson, and their questionable actions led to a petition demanding the removal of McCook from his public office. President Grant bowed to the pressure, asked McCook to resign prior to the end of his term, and named Samuel Elbert governor.

McCook did not step down graciously nor willingly; indeed, he fought back with accusations of his own. He successfully convinced Grant to remove Elbert and reappoint him as governor in 1874. This led to further faction within the Republican community. In March 1875 McCook was once again removed from his office. He was succeeded by John L. Routt

Following his two terms as governor McCook engaged in business and commercial enterprises. He had an interest in a European telephone syndicate and owned the Batopolis, one of Mexico's richest silver mines.

Edward Moody McCook died in Chicago on September 9, 1909. Although both of McCook's terms as governor were marred by political unrest, he is remembered as a great orator and a man devoted to the interests of the territory of Colorado.

Scope and Content

This Collection is comprised of correspondence (1/1/1868-9/8/1907), a program for the Festival of Mountain and Plain held on October 5th, 6th, and 7th 1897, and a newspaper, the Denver Record- An Amateur Paper (5/23/1903).

The letters to and from Governor McCook, James B. Thompson, Indian agent, and R.S. Reynolds, president of the Argentine Consolidated Mining Company of Portland, Colorado, throw light on their respective business ventures, Indian affairs at the time, the political milieu and the Argentine Mine.

Subjects

McCook, Edward Moody, 1833-1909
Governors--Colorado--Manuscripts
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Ute Indians--Government relations--Manuscripts
Colorado--Politics and government--to 1876--Manuscripts
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8	Correspondence	6/1/1881-9/8/1907
9	Correspondence	n.d.
10	Program: Festival of Mountain and Plain	10/5-7/1897
11	Newspaper: Denver Record – An Amateur Paper	5/23/1903

Additional Information:

Provenance

Donated by Harry C. Stewart, June 1944.

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