

CHAPTER SIX

**PROFESSOR MARDEN'S
LIFE WORK FINISHED¹**

Editor's Note: The early history of Colorado College can be summed up thusly. For the first two years, 1874 to 1876, Thomas Nelson Haskell, Jonathan Edwards, and President James Dougherty struggled to get the College started. Over the following eight years, from 1876 to 1884, President Edward Payson Tenney turned Colorado College into a thriving and successful educational institution. During the next four years, from 1884 to 1888, Colorado College had no President and struggled mightily to survive.

Throughout this difficult four-year period without a President, the leading professors ran Colorado College and enabled it to keep going. Prominent among those professors was George N. Marden, who held a joint appointment in History, Political Science, and Metaphysics. He gave up his teaching chores and traveled the East Coast of the United States raising money for the College. He also found the College a new President in the person of William Frederick Slocum. For these efforts, an anonymous writer described Marden as "the savior of Colorado College."

Marden also served ten years as the Treasurer of Colorado College. In his letter of resignation from that job, he lamented that he had been called from teaching and scholarship to be an administrator. He wrote: "I have found satisfaction in putting myself in at any point along the line wherever I was most needed. I have never regretted the sacrifice made in giving up my own studies to work in ways that will help others to study."²

¹ "George Nathaniel Marden," Funeral Program, in file: Admin-Treasurer-Biography-Marden, George Nathaniel, in Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.

² Letter, George Nathaniel Marden to the Board of Trustees of Colorado College, May 30, 1906, in file: Admin-Treasurer-Biography-Marden, George Nathaniel, in Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.

GEORGE N. MARDEN

The following article, George N. Marden's obituary, appeared in the Colorado Springs Gazette on November 8th, 1908.

Professor George Nathaniel Marden, benefactor of Colorado College and former Vice President, Treasurer and member of the faculty of the institution, died of uremic poisoning yesterday morning at 10 o'clock at his home, 1305 North Cascade Ave. He was 72 years old. Professor Marden is survived by his wife and a daughter, Mrs. George Soule, of Denver.

The funeral will be conducted from Perkins Hall [at Colorado College] tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock. Dr. J. B. Gregg, pastor of the First Congregational Church, will be in charge of the services, assisted by President [William F.] Slocum and Dean [Edward S.] Parsons. Temporary interment will be in the receiving vault at Evergreen Cemetery. Later the remains will be taken for burial in Fairmount [Cemetery in Denver].

In honor to the memory of Professor Marden, all College and academy exercises will be suspended tomorrow afternoon. The College flag is flying at half-mast.

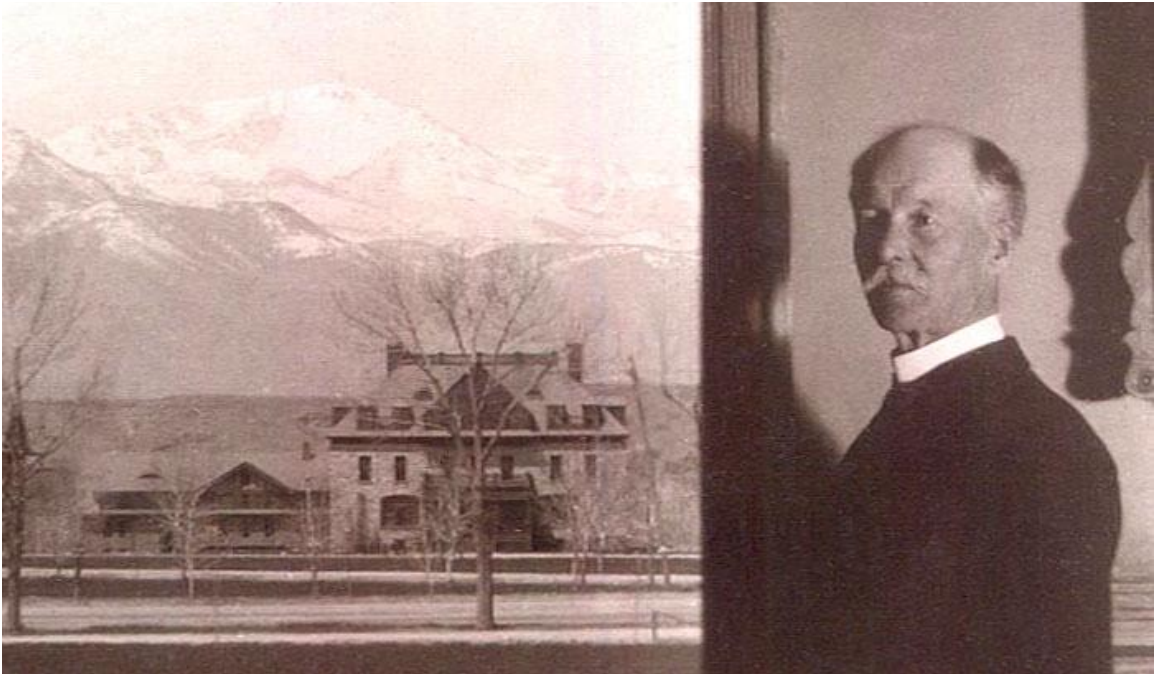
The following account of the career of Professor Marden was written for the *Gazette* by Dr. E. S. Parsons, Dean of Colorado College:

The death of Professor Marden breaks another of the links which have bound the new Colorado Springs and the new Colorado College to the old. For nearly thirty years, Mr. Marden was an honored citizen of Colorado Springs and a familiar figure on its streets, and his services to the College, covering in time three-quarters of its history, laid the solid foundations for all the successes of its later years.

As President Slocum has said, he did "a work without which the College would not be in existence today." Mr. Marden was so modest and unassuming, and so self-forgetful, that only those who have known intimately the inner history of the College have realized the inestimable value of his service to it. Only the clearer perspective of the future can make it fully understood and appreciated.

George Nathaniel Marden was born at West Concord, New Hampshire, March 18th, 1836. His mother and father were typical New Englanders, and from them and their training he inherited the sturdy qualities that marked his life - a keen sense of humor, great devotion to principle and to duty, [and] scrupulous fidelity to every trust....

GEORGE N. MARDEN



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In this unusual photograph, Marden appears to be standing next to an open window looking out on Montgomery Hall in the foreground, McGregor Hall behind Montgomery Hall, and Pike's Peak in the background. Closer inspection reveals he is standing next to a painting or a large photograph rather than a window. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)

GEORGE N. MARDEN

Mr. Marden received his early education at Kimball Union Academy, Meriden, New Hampshire, of which Dr. Cyrus Richards was principal. He then took a three-years theological course at Bangor seminary, was ordained in 1862, and began his pastoral work at Boxboro, Massachusetts. He had charges also at Orland, Maine, and at South Weymouth, Massachusetts. His pastoral work was interrupted by service at two different times as an agent of the United States Christian Commission in the South and in Washington during and immediately after the Civil War. His devotion to this work almost cost him his life, for it brought on a severe attack of malarial fever from which he recovered with difficulty.

While Mr. Marden was a pastor at Weymouth, he received a call to the professorship of Political Economy and History at Colorado College, with vice-presidential duties in absence of the President. He accepted and came to Colorado Springs in August 1881. Three years later his great work for the College began. The President [Edward P. Tenney] resigned, the College was heavily in debt, the situation seemed absolutely hopeless, and apparently there was only one thing to be done - to close the College doors.

But Mr. Marden thought differently, and so, giving up the work that was most congenial to him, his preaching and his teaching, he went east and pleaded the cause of the College in the churches and offices of business all over New England and the middle states. No missionary on the foreign field showed more heroic self-devotion and self-sacrifice. His hopefulness and indomitable courage won the day. The College was kept open.

In 1888, Mr. Marden discovered and introduced to the Board of Trustees the man under whose wise and effective leadership the College was so rapidly pushed to the front - President William F. Slocum.

For many years after this decisive event Mr. Marden remained in the East, keeping alive the interests in the welfare of the College in the minds of many of the friends he had made for it and gathering funds for its work, collecting in all a quarter of a million dollars. Then, when this work was no longer greatly needed, he returned to Colorado Springs and became Treasurer of the college, an office which he held for ten years - nine years before his resignation and one year after, while necessary adjustments were being made for carrying on the work.

In the [Treasurer's] office, he showed the same fidelity and devotion which had marked his efforts in the field. Most of the College investments during his term were made by him personally, and in this difficult and

GEORGE N. MARDEN

important work he showed rare discretion. It was largely due to conscientious attention to the details of this side of his work that the College record in investments has been so remarkable. Nothing could be finer than his sense of honor in the handling of the trust funds of the institution. To him, their sacredness was the more profound, because he knew so thoroughly how much self-sacrifice they represented to the many [persons] who had entrusted them to the College. Thus his work in the office rounded out and completed his work in the field. Through both avenues of effort he gave himself unreservedly to the College, whose welfare became the one great object of his ambition and his love.

The occasion of his seventieth birthday and the completion of twenty-five years of service with the College was one that called out the expression of the warm feelings of his many friends. A number of them gathered at his home at that time and presented him with a loving cup of beaten silver inscribed with words that expressed something of their appreciation of his character and his work. He always said that this was the happiest day of his life.

Two months later he resigned his office, feeling, as he expressed himself in his letter of resignation, that he had “reached an age when, as said by an old Roman, men are ‘not only not expected to do what they cannot but not even what they can.’”

A year later he was relieved of duties of the office, and he went abroad with Mrs. Marden. Early in the present year, in Florence, he suffered a severe attack of pneumonia. From this he had not fully recovered when he returned about a month ago to the home, which had always been so dear to him. It was a great joy to him that he was spared to reach home and that he could go out of his life into the next from the friends he knew and loved so well.

“One of my friends,” Mr. Marden once said, “insisted that I was throwing myself away for Colorado College. Well, I thought it was about as good a throw as I could make.”

We who have come after him are certainly more grateful than we can tell him for his gift of his life in a great cause. And while we remember his rare devotion, his incorruptibility, his fidelity to everything great or small which he felt to be his duty, we cannot forget other traits which brought him very near to those who knew him best. [They were] his sense of humor and his shrewd wisdom, his great capacity for friendship, the wealth of

GEORGE N. MARDEN

tenderheartedness at the center of his nature. A real friend has gone out from among us.



1305 NORTH CASCADE AVENUE

George and Sarah Marden built and lived in this beautiful Old North End neighborhood home at the northeast corner of North Cascade Avenue and East San Miguel Street. (Photograph from Robert D. Loevy collection.)

GEORGE N. MARDEN



THE GRAVES OF GEORGE AND SARAH MARDEN

George and Sarah Marden are buried in Fairmount Cemetery in Denver, Colorado. (Photograph by Robert D. Loevy.)