

Joshua Edwin Sweet

August 9, 1877 — April 8, 1957

Joshua Edwin Sweet, Emeritus Professor of Surgical Research, was born in Unadilla, New York, August 9, 1877, son of a country doctor. After completing his preliminary education in the local schools, he matriculated at Hamilton College where he earned the A. B. in 1897 and received the A. M. in 1900. In 1922 the D. Sc. was conferred upon him. In 1901 he received the M. D. degree at Giessen. He was Scott Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania 1901-02. From 1902 to 1906 he was a Fellow of the Rockefeller Institute. He was a Root Fellow, Hamilton College, 1907-1908; Assistant Professor of Experimental Surgery, University of Pennsylvania, 1906 to 1917; and Professor, 1917 to 1926.

His society memberships included The American College of Surgeons, Surgical Research Society, American Medical Association, Physiological Society, Society of Experimental Pathology, Society of Experimental Biology, New York Academy of Medicine.

He was called to Cornell to establish a new department of Surgical Research in 1926, and headed this department until his retirement in 1941. In his philosophy, he visualized a department to which any member of the instructing staff might bring his problems and find enthusiastic help in their solution. His success was measured by the many men who came to work under his direction and the large numbers of papers published from his department. His own publications were numerous and varied. His own research interests were widespread but his greatest enthusiasm was claimed by the gall bladder and the biliary tract.

During World War I he served in France with the Army Medical Corps, and at the end of hostilities he was Lt. Col, consultant on experimental surgery to the Commanding General A. E. F.

Dr. Sweet never lost his love for the rural region in which he was born. Summer vacations were invariably spent on the family farm where he developed an outstanding herd of dairy cattle producing certified milk. His dairy herd was not his only interest; for many summers were also occupied with building his house for retirement. With the help of local carpenters he conceived the plans and performed much of the work himself. Being a resourceful man he made use of his many horsechestnut trees killed by the widespread blight. This wood, cut at a local mill, was used for floors, stairways, and much of the interior woodwork. The final finishing of this beautiful chestnut was done by Dr. Sweet by hand, and his love of accurate work resulted in a handsome and useful home.

On retirement Dr. Sweet did not confine himself to his farm and dairy herd. He took an active part in the affairs of his community, serving for some time as president of the local hospital at Sidney, and acting as consultant in the neighborhood.

After a lingering illness Dr. Sweet died in a nursing home at nearby Bainbridge April 8, 1957. Sincere sympathy goes to his widow, Florence West Sweet, his daughter Mrs. George Kittell (Ruth Sweet), and his grandchildren.

An old friend and fellow worker has passed on, leaving the world a better place for his having lived and worked in it.

John E. Sutton