

Duncan Oklahoma
March 24, 1926.

Hon. R. C. Crane,
Sweetwater, Texas.

Dear Mr. Crane:

I have your letter of March 22nd in which you ask for a statement of specific events and circumstances connected with the launching and organization of the West Texas A. & M. College during the year 1916. In reply will state that this is the first and only detailed statement of the facts connected therewith which has been made by me and to these statements I shall subscribe my name under oath.

In the fall of 1915 I was Manager of the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce and about that time there was an editorial appeared in the Fort Worth Record of Fort Worth, Texas, written by Hugh Nugent Fitzgerald, calling attention to the need of the great educational institution to be located somewhere in West Texas, and among other reasons stating that West Texas had contributed the land which builded the State Capitol and that no institution of higher learning of any nature was located within its borders and that the young men and women of that vast territory must necessarily go several hundred miles in order to attend such an institution.

After the appearance of this editorial, I discussed its merits with J. H. Beall, R. C. Crane and R. A. Ragland and I learned that this suggestion was not a new one but that several movements looking to this end had been attempted and had failed. About this time, I received a letter from Porter A. Whaley, Secretary Amarillo Board of Development, asking me for my opinion as to the starting of a movement for the creation of an agricultural and mechanical college to be located West of the 98th Meridian. I immediately answered him and stated that I had had this matter under consideration for some time and was in heart accord with his suggestion, and thought it was an opportune time to call a meeting to perfect an organization and suggested that such meeting be called at Sweetwater, Texas and if the same met with his approval, I would immediately issue the call. He wired me at once that he would join me in such a movement and on receipt of this telegram, I immediately issued an invitation to the towns of West Texas to meet in convention at Sweetwater to perfect such organization.

At the convention, Porter A. Whaley of Amarillo was present and only a few West Texas towns were represented; the convention being composed principally of Sweetwater citizens who were interested in the movement. Dr. P. C. Coleman of Colorado came in answer to the invitation extended to his town and San Angelo, Big Springs, Colorado, Sweetwater, Plainview and Amarillo were represented at this meeting. An organization was perfected by the election of Dr. P. C. Coleman of Colorado as President; Porter A. Whaley of Amarillo as Vice President, and myself as Secretary and Treasurer. Outside of the publicity gained at this meeting the only other matter of importance was the assessment of \$5.00 to each town who entered the Association for the purpose of defraying the expense of literature and postage. The office of the West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n was located in my office and the entire campaign was directed from there. This was done with the full approval of the Directors of the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce. I immediately launched a statewide campaign, making an appeal to the State for fair treatment for West Texas and asking that a full A & M Agricultural College be located

West of the 98th Meridian. This personal letter campaign went into every county in the State and the first installment of letters were sent to an average of fifty prominent citizens in each county. These letters were changed from time to time, making a new form of appeal and were sent wherever names and addresses could be secured. During this time wide publicity was had from some of the large daily papers, notably the Fort Worth Record of which Hugh Nugent Fitzgerald was Editor and who was in entire sympathy with the justice of the movement and in addition thereto many local papers throughout the State. I personally attended almost all of the major conventions throughout the State, seeking their endorsement and without exception secured the endorsement of every convention which I attended and which met during the year of 1916, notably among which were the Texas Women's Federated Clubs, State Teachers Ass'n, State Medical Ass'n, and others.

About this time a determined opposition was noticeable in the Board of Regents at the A & M College of Texas and especially in the attitude of Dr. W. B. Bizzell, who was at that time President of that institution. They proposed to compromise with us if we would agree to the establishment of a Junior Agricultural & Mechanical College to be located in the West, to be operated and conducted solely by the Trustees of this institution. This demand we vehemently declined and gave them notice that the fight was on for an independent institution in the West. Dr. P. C. Coleman, Homer D. Wade, myself and others of the Directorate, whose names I do not now recall, visited Bryan on this mission. On my return from Sweetwater, I requested Dr. P. C. Coleman, President of the organization, to call a meeting to be held in San Angelo in May, 1916, at which meeting there were present Dr. Coleman and myself, Thomas F. Owen of San Angelo, Clyde B. Metcalf of San Angelo and Representatives from the Chambers of Commerce of Big Springs, Snyder and Post. It was decided and authorized by resolution to issue a lengthy appeal to the citizens of Texas, calling attention to the reason why an independent college of this nature should be located in the West and emphasizing the justice of such movement. Clyde B. Metcalf, who was at that time Representative of Tom Green County, Thomas F. Owen, President of the San Angelo Board of City Development and myself were appointed a committee to draft such an appeal. At this meeting it was also decided to call on each town interested in West Texas to contribute from \$10.00 to \$25.00 according to their interest and importance, to pay the expense of this campaign. This appeal was printed in letter form and several hundred thousand letters were mailed under a two cent stamp throughout the State. The towns of West Texas did not respond very liberally to the demand for money for expenses and all deficits which were quite frequent during the year of 1916 were raised by personal subscription from contributions of the citizens of Sweetwater. I also state that throughout this entire campaign and during the year 1916, the expenses of my assistant who was Miss Pink Wade were paid by the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce and the Sweetwater Board of City Development. In June, 1916, I think it was, a meeting was called at Fort Worth, Texas and the towns represented at that time were Sweetwater, Colorado, San Angelo, Big Springs, Post City, Wichita Falls, Cisco, and Stephenville. Nothing of importance transpired at this meeting, except a report from Dr. P. C. Coleman, President of the West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n. and myself as Secretary and Treasurer. Our plan of campaign was endorsed and we were instructed to proceed along the plans which we had formulated. As a result of this meeting at Fort Worth we received wide publicity through the columns of the Fort Worth Record and Fort Worth Star Telegram, which articles were widely copied throughout the State.

Immediately following this meeting we concluded to hold another at Lubbock, Texas and at this meeting the following towns were represented: Colorado, Sweetwater, San Angelo, Lubbock, Plainview, and Amarillo. This meeting was held for the purpose of securing

more hearty cooperation from that section of the Plains and also to get some publicity in that section which we very badly needed. The report of Dr. Coleman, President of the organization and of myself as Secretary and Treasurer were the features of this meeting and by resolution we were instructed to proceed as we had been doing in the furtherance of the movement. About this time the State Convention of the Democratic Party was to be held in Houston and Dr. Coleman and myself concluded that one of the most important achievements would be a plank in the Democratic Platform demanding the establishment of a full West Texas A & M College to be located West of the 98th Meridian. Myself and Lang Aycock of Sweetwater were delegates to this Convention from Nolan County and participated in the presentation of this matter to the Platform Committee. Prior to this time I had asked every county in West Texas to instruct its delegates in accordance with these demands and very nearly all of the counties of West Texas acceded to the request and so instructed. Notably among those who assisted me before the Platform Committee of the State Convention were Homer D. Wade of Stamford and Dr. S. P. Brooks of Waco, who was a member of the Committee. We secured the plank in the Democratic Platform by a majority of one vote. The matter only went before the Convention in the form of its full report on platforms and was endorsed without a dissenting vote. The Campaign of Publicity and the Letter Campaign which was begun early in the movement were carried on throughout the entire year of 1916 without abatement.

Early in the Fall it became apparent that a considerable fight was being prosecuted for the Speakership of the 1917 Legislature and after making an exhaustive investigation of the prospective candidates and what their attitude would be towards the establishment of a West Texas A & M College, I concluded that it would be best for the Association to support Frank O. Fuller of Cold Springs for this position, and to further this end, I invited him to a meeting to be held at Wichita Falls in the Fall of 1916. At this Convention he openly declared for the establishment of such an institution and I immediately began to campaign to line up for him the entire West Texas vote. This was accomplished so far as my recollection serves without a single defection from the ranks. Frank O. Fuller was agreed upon for Speaker before the opening of the Legislature, all other candidates withdrawing and which resulted in his unanimous election. At the meeting at Wichita Falls, the following towns, as I now recall them, were represented: Colorado, Sweetwater, Post, Plainview, Amarillo, Memphis, Vernon, Wichita Falls, and some of the smaller towns surrounding. One of the principal features at this meeting at Wichita Falls was the appointment of a representative to attend the Legislature of 1917 and have full control of the movement to establish this institution in the West. On resolution, unanimously carried, Dr. P. C. Coleman, President of the organization, who was present was authorized to make the appointment of the man who was to fill this place and in obedience to this resolution Dr. Coleman appointed me to go to Austin and have absolute charge of the movement before the Legislature.

At this time, a contribution was called for, to defray the expenses of the Austin campaign and the following amounts were subscribed and paid:

Wichita Falls, \$250.00; Sweetwater, \$250.00; Spur, \$250.00; Post, \$250.00; San Angelo, \$250.00;

Amarillo through Porter A. Whaley subscribed \$250.00 but according to my recollection only paid about \$75.00, however, this exact amount can be verified by my financial statement which is in the hands of R. C. Crane of Sweetwater. I made a personal trip into that territory in an effort to collect funds for this movement at which time I was accompanied by Porter A. Whaley, but no contributions were

made in that section. At a later time, \$100.00 was remitted by the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce with the request that it be credited to Vernon, Texas.

After reaching Austin and the House of Representatives had been organized, I appeared before the Educational Committee of twenty-one members and with the assistance of Bruce W. Bryan of Haskell, secured a unanimous endorsement of this Committee and the Bill in its original form was sent to the House with the recommendation that it DO PASS. As a result a Bill passed the House by almost a unanimous vote.

At this time I had selected Senator Claude Hudspeth of El Paso to handle the Bill for West Texas in the Senate and it became apparent after conference that some minor changes would have to be made in the Bill, in order to meet the approval of the Senate. Some of the men most valuable in ironing out these differences were the Honorable Will Bledsoe of Lubbock; Hon. C. B. Medcalf of San Angelo; Hon. Bruce W. Bryan of Haskell; Hon. Fritz R. Smith of Snyder; Hon. A. R. Spencer of Sweetwater.

I went before the Senate Committee on Education, personally, and had as my opposing factor Dr. W. B. Bizzell, at that time President of A & M College. Prior to the decision of the Senate Committee, Senator Bee of Beeville, who was a friend to the measure, approached me saying: that he did not believe that I would be able to get the measure through the Senate unless I agreed to the establishment of a Junior A & M College under the direction and control of the A & M College of Texas. I answered him that we would not accept this, that we had made our demands for a full A & M College for the West and nothing less than this would satisfy us. The measure got only a minority report in the Senate but under the wise leadership of Senator Claude Hudspeth, whose heart was in this movement we secured a majority vote for the bill which later became a law, receiving the approval of James E. Ferguson, then Governor of Texas.

The Locating Committee met at Austin and after a short session announced that the school had been located at Abilene by a vote of three to two. No sooner than this announcement was made three members of the Locating Committee of five, announced that they had at no time voted for Abilene. This brought about a general meeting of West Texas which was held at Sweetwater under the auspices of West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n. I did not act in the capacity of Secretary of this meeting, but was instructed by the Association as its Secretary and also by the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce in which I held the same position, to secure the affidavit of Speaker F. O. Fuller and Lt. W. P. Hobby that they did not, at any time, vote for Abilene as a place of location. At this time Fred W. Davis, Commissioner of Agriculture, had made the statement that he had at no time voted for Abilene. These affidavits I secured for the West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n. Outside of the money contributed by the towns for the Austin Campaign, all other moneys expended and all deficits and salary of stenographer were paid by the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce and by donations from the citizens of Sweetwater, which during the year 1916 were numerous. During the entire year of 1916 and a greater part of 1917, Sweetwater gave my entire time to the promotion of this movement; paying my salary and other expenses connected therewith. At no time during my connection as Secretary & Treasurer of the West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n did I receive one cent of salary from that organization.

More than any other man in West Texas, in my opinion, and based upon my association and intimate connection with him, there is no one man entitled to more credit for the success of this movement in its entirety than Dr. P. C. Coleman of Colorado who was President of the organization throughout the entire campaign.

(signed) Thos. F. Hodge

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 24th day of March, 1926.

My com. exp. 1-17-29

(signed) Bute C. Brooke, Notary Public.

SEAL

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF THOS. F. HODGES. ON WRIGHT'S
STORY

My attention has just been called to an article in the Western Weekly of Sunday, March 21st, 1926 under the caption of "A History of the Texas Tech. College", written by Hamilton Wright; (I do not know Mr. Wright, never heard of him before.) in which he attempts to state the inside facts relative to the conception and development of the School idea, which was sponsored by the West Texas A & M Campaign Association during the years of 1916 and 1917.

I do not know from whom Mr. Wright secured the purported facts, which were the basis of his article, but I do know that he did not secure them from the only living man who knew them.

The first paragraph in Mr. Wright's statement is correct. Porter A. Whaley did write such a letter to various Chambers of Commerce and I received one of them and to which I replied favorably and suggested that the meeting be held in Sweetwater. This was agreed upon and the call for the meeting was issued by the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce, of which I was Secretary.

I did make an affidavit to the effect that Mr. Whaley wrote such a letter, which I understood was simply for the files of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce and I had no idea that it was later to be used in an attempt to give Mr. Whaley credit for the success of the movement.

I infer from Mr. Wright's statement that Mr. Whaley was the owner of the original idea, when in fact, West Texas had discussed such an institution when Mr. Whaley was in South Carolina and I was a farmer in Louisiana.

The only thing involved was the opportune time for the renewal of an old idea.

Mr. Whaley is to be congratulated for writing the letter which identified him with the organization which was effected at Sweetwater April 6th, 1916.

As to what Mr. Whaley did after this meeting toward furthering the campaign, I will deal later.

As to the Second Paragraph; Mr. Wright deals principally with what occurred at Amarillo. I have no way of knowing how many letters Mr. Whaley wrote relative to this meeting, from Amarillo, but I do know the official call came from the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce, in fact, I do not know of any one else who would have the authority to invite the towns of West Texas to a Convention at Sweetwater, except the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce. I want the truth of history to record, however, that Mr. Whaley wrote that "famous letter of suggestion" which he thought, perhaps, was an "original idea" and to which fact I made affidavit for the files of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce and I trust the future historians of West Texas will not fail to place him in the Hall of Fame, because he resurrected an idea as old as West Texas and then wrote a few letters about it.

The Third Paragraph of Mr. Wright's article is substantially correct and upon this, I will make no comments except that Mr. Porter A. Whaley was elected Vice-President instead of the statement made.

The officers of the West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n is shown upon its stationary, which is in the hands of R. C. Crane of Sweetwater and upon this point there should be no argument.

(*) Paragraph Omitted Here - See last page

The campaign was conducted during 1916 and 17 exclusively from my office in Sweetwater, Texas and from no other source. The reference made to a publicity campaign out of Amarillo, I never had any knowledge of it and the West Texas A & M Campaign Ass'n had no knowledge of it.

I hardly think it necessary to reply to this as every one familiar with this Campaign knows that it was conducted exclusively from the Sweetwater office. I never, at any time, as Secretary and Treasurer of the Association, used any copy or statistics from Hamilton Parker,

Traffic Manager of the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce.

As to the further facts recited by Mr. Wright in his article, I refer to my sworn statement of facts and circumstances connected with the West Texas A & M Campaign Association in the hands of R. C. Crane of Sweetwater.

After the organization meeting at Sweetwater, the connection of Porter A. Whaley with the Campaign so far as I know as Secretary and Treasurer, consisted in his attendance upon two or possibly three of the meetings held in connection therewith and the contribution of less than \$75.00 from his entire section, and possibly one hundred unanswered letters from my office.

My reasons for making these statements are that the facts might be known.

As secretary and Treasurer of this organization, I have never sought any credit for what I did, because I feel that at the best, I was only doing my duty, but I preferred to let the credit for the success of this movement rest with the thousands of West Texans who helped in its accomplishment.

Among those who worked hard in the Campaign during 1916 were: C. B. Metcalf of San Angelo; Thos. F. Owen of San Angelo; J. F. Hartford of Post and General R. K. Smythe of Plainview. It would be impossible for me to give the names of Sweetwater men who assisted in the movement, but suffice it to say, that more than a hundred gave me active support and contributed liberally towards the campaign.

I note in the list of towns appearing in Mr. Wright's article as being large contributors, the name of Sweetwater was omitted. Sweetwater paid \$250.00 to the Legislature Campaign alone, to say nothing of its contributions during 1916 and 17, and in addition thereto my salary and expenses when my entire time was being given to this Campaign. Something has been said about Dr. Coleman's entrance into the Campaign. He was selected by a delegation of Sweetwater Citizens as the proper man to head the movement, but he protested until we overwhelmed him with a demand that he serve West Texas as a section. He reluctantly accepted the responsibility, but one of the most fortunate days for West Texas in connection with this movement was the day Dr. Coleman consented to become its President. His wisdom counsel and advice was my greatest asset during the trying days of the Campaign and the circumstances which followed.

5/1/26

(signed) Thos. F. Hodge

* Under the heading of "subsequent meetings" I will state that I have no recollection of a meeting being held at Amarillo and have no record of such meeting, however, a meeting was held at San Angelo which was not mentioned and three meetings were held at Sweetwater. As to the contributions to the Austin Campaign, I refer to my original sworn statement which is verified by my financial report in the hands of R. C. Crane of Sweetwater.