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San Antonio. 18 May 71

Dear Father

We arrived here Thursday Eveng [*sic*] last. Since then we have been busy talking to the various parties to whom we have letters—enquiring the locations of ranch men and looking into the business as thoroughly as as [*sic*] possible from this point.

We have met numerous ranch men who are in town selling their sheering clip. They all seem willing to give us all the information in their power and almost all of them have cordially invited us to visit them at their ranches, and see for ourselves how the business is managed.

They all speak well of the profits of sheep raising in this section (IE South Western Texas) of the good water and pasturage and the immunity of the sheep from almost all diseases common in many other parts of the country.

The great trouble seems to be in the matter of lands—as sheep require from 2 to 3 acres per head to graze on during the year, some ranchmen claim that they

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cannot afford to buy all the land they graze over, and do the business with good profits.

They have been in the habit of buying or locating a few hundred acres on some water hole or stream and allowing their sheep to graze over the unoccupied prairie—the objections this, in the more thickly settled counties are—first—that other men are apt to settle near them and thus contracting their free grazing ground, prevent them in a measure from increasing their flocks or they have no pasturage for the [increase] secondly—if located near a town, as soon as you are thoroughly settled some miserable land agent will locate his land certificates just in front of you, and oblige you to buy his land or shut you off from the prairie—and if you buy of him once then he is ready to “plant” another for you & so on.

This matter of land has only been mentioned by 2 or 3 of the many we have spoken to and I think it somewhat exaggerated, but we can tell better when we get out into the country.

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The remedy however in at all will be to make our start in the business at a distance from any town where the lands are comparatively unoccupied.

This we will be obliged to do anyway, as the country within 75 miles of here is too thickly settled and land too expensive to think of buying enough to ultimately run a large ranch.

A man can easily run a flock of 5000 within 30 or 40 miles of here—but as the expenses of 5000 are almost as great as [on] 10000 and so on in proportion of course it will be our policy, altho [*sic*] commencing in a small way, to get such a location as will enable us to run a large flock at some future time.

We hope to be able to leave here on Friday. Our first trip will be to Fort Clark (145 miles west of here) on the way to and in the vicinity of which are some of the best ranches. To do this thoroughly and return by a different route will take us a month or more—our expenses on the trip will be almost minimal, with the

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Of a guide at about \$30 a month. We thought we could do without one, but we are strongly advised to take one, and think it will be a [saving] in the end.

We have provided ourselves with a camping outfit so that we will be independent of the miserable Hotels of this country—we will not think of buying sheep or land till we have examined the country pretty thoroughly, probably not until September. From the looks of the wool market the chances are that sheep will be even cheaper then than at present.

In the mean time, now that we have our horses and outfit, we can travel around at almost no expense and the knowledge we will gain of the country and the life generally will be of great benefit to us in the future.

When leaving New York on the Steamer you will remember Mr [Ried] gave me a letter to a Judge [Crosly] at Houston asking me to call on him and enquire about the claim which I believe you are interested with Mr [Ried]. We passed near Houston but did not go through the City. I thought it best not stop there, as I knew nothing [*unclear*] of the case, and in consequence could not enquire about it very [*unclear*] If you wish me to go there, send me some of the particulars of the case, and I will take the first opportunity of going, altho' it will be of considerable cost from here.

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I have drawn on you through [Duxel M & Co] for \$50 & \$150—2 dfts, which will be all I'll need for some time. We start for Fort Clack tomorrow.

Love to all [from] [*unclear*]

Joe Tweedy