

# Artifact Spotlight

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Nashville, Tenn.

Oct. 30, 1920.

My dear Mr. Committeeman:-

Just as we had anticipated, the Democratic organization, in the closing hours of this Campaign, has given circulation to all sorts of scurrilous falsehoods concerning our Nominees, Senator Harding and Col. Taylor. They have openly charged that negroes sat with Col. Taylor on the stage when he spoke at Alexandria recently. A sworn statement from scores of the best men in that community is herewith enclosed, which brands it as an utter falsehood.

But the most damnable lie which has appeared is contained in a mimeographed letter which is being anonymously circulated all over Tennessee accusing Senator Harding of being tainted with negro blood and charging that his father is a mulatto. Prof. Chancellor of Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio, who made this baseless charge on account of personal malice against Senator Harding was on yesterday discharged in disgrace from the faculty of the College.

Senator Harding's father, who, according to this circular is a mulatto, is an honored citizen, a practicing physician, and a G.A.R. veteran still living in Marion, Ohio.

Reputable Democratic newspapers knowing its falsity, refused to publish this accusation. Even the Democratic organization in this State, afraid to come out in the open with such a charge, is having it sent out in plain envelopes, and transmitted by word of mouth by irresponsible and criminal ward healers.

Brand these reports for just what they are, baseless and unqualified lies, and a decent citizenship, regardless of party affiliation, will back you up.

Spare no effort to circulate the truth, and the reaction will engulf the party that is guilty of the infamy.

Very sincerely yours,

*Sam R. Sells*

Chairman on Organization.

G-rw

False accusations and innuendo have been a part of American presidential politics since the founding of the republic. Over the years many different issues have been used in attempts to damage a candidate's chance for victory. Many times claims were made that a candidate was of mixed-race, with one parent or grandparent having African American lineage. These racist claims were believed to influence a voter's choice. Such accusations were made during the 1920 presidential campaign of Warren Harding. The letter shown here, archived in the Museum of American History at Cabot, makes false claims that Harding's father was of mixed blood. The accusation seems to have had little impact on his campaign. He easily defeated the Democratic candidate James Cox.

