

**Letter from Hannah Hall to Dan Tompkins**

**06 May, 1933**

**Hunter Library MSS 80-14-01-02-04**

**Transcribed and Edited by**

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**For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English**

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## Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
  - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
    - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
  - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
    - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
  - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
    - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
  - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

## Introduction

By John Falter

When Hannah Hall wrote this letter, prohibition was still officially in effect; the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment would not be repealed until December 1933. However, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, Congress passed the Cullen-Harrison Act, which legalized the sale of 3.2 percent beer and wine in any state whose legislature permitted it.

On April 5 that year, the NC House of Representatives voted to permit the sale of beer and wine starting May 1<sup>st</sup>, which Dan Tompkins announced that day in the *Jackson County Journal*. The beer bill received overwhelming support: “75 for the and 27 against.” However, among the dissent was Dan Tompkins, along with the representatives from other mountain counties, Yancey, Buncombe, Haywood and Macon.

Additionally, Tompkins pressed for an amendment to the bill, which would revoke “licenses... where the sellers of beer engage in bootlegging,” as well as ban the sale of alcohol in the proximity of churches and schools, and ban its sale on Sundays. The House of Representatives supported Tompkins’ amendment as a regulatory measure, providing some parameters many believed the bill lacked. As Tompkins writes, “The bill would have possibly have received more votes than it did, had the regulatory amendments been adopted. Some representatives state that they would have voted for it if it had been in proper shape.” By his vote against the bill and his proposed regulatory amendment, Tompkins made a name for himself as a supporter of temperance.

By May 2<sup>nd</sup>, ads for beer began showing up in the *Ruralite*, the newspaper Tompkins edited. In response to these ads, Mrs. Hannah Hall, a supporter of temperance, writes to Tompkins, praising him for his legislative opposition in April and to express her fervent displeasure at the spread of alcohol in Sylva. And though she could have railed against Tompkins for publishing the ads, Mrs. Hall seems warmly supportive of him.

This letter is housed in the Special Collections department of the Hunter Library at Western Carolina University.

## Editorial Statement

There is one copy of the letter. It is written in two pages, in a loose cursive hand. The writer leaves a few words out, perhaps for space requirements. Also, she denotes the word “and” with a plus sign, and not an ampersand. Finally, the writer crosses her Ts in a curious manner, waiting sometimes till far later in the sentence and leaving an errant dash above unrelated words to form her cross.

The following transcription faithfully matches the line breaks of the original letter. The page break is marked with the bracketed phrase: [PAGE BREAK]. The original margining and indentations are also preserved as best possible.

Annotations are listed in footnotes. Some of the letter writer's facts are mixed up, for instance she says there were "ads" for beer in "today's Ruralite." However, the most recent Ruralite at the time of her writing (May 6<sup>th</sup>) was for May 2<sup>nd</sup> and there was only one ad for beer.

May 6<sup>th</sup> 1933

My dear Dan,

I'm writing to tell you

how much I appreciate  
stand you have taken about  
beer.<sup>1</sup> have heard so many  
express themselves. That is the  
right-minded folks. I'm sorry to see  
in today's Ruralite several  
ads.<sup>2</sup> I also see + hear plans  
to not trade or patronize with  
folks that deal in it. Feel  
that is what we should all  
do, cut them. Because this  
has been forced on us by  
Sin, why should we accept it?  
I'm in favor of fighting

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Tompkins voted against the April 5<sup>th</sup> legalization of 3.2 percent beer and wine. He also proposed regulations on their sale.

<sup>2</sup> The May 2, 1933 *Ruralite* included an advertisement for "ICE COLD BEER" at Stovall's Fruit Stand, owned by James Philip Stovall.

[PAGE BREAK]

to last day in every way.

We could raise another Carrie

Nations [*sic*]<sup>3</sup>. Please continue to

help defeat the beer + beer

drinkers + dealers—we will

win in more ways than

one. Thanking you + just

to let you know you have

made a name for right.

With best wishes of all my

household.

Very sincerely,

Mrs. Hannah Hall<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Carrie Nation (1846–1911) was a famous temperance leader, known for wielding hatchets as a tool of vigilante mayhem. “She broke windows and mirrors as well as destroyed kegs of beer or whiskey with her hatchets. At times, she attacked the people who sold the alcohol” (Teske and Wolfe).

<sup>4</sup> Hannah Hall (1866–1962)

## Works Cited

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