SERIES INTRO

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 them 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

Raymond Rockhill Nicholson was born in Jackson County in 1898. He studied at what is today known as Western Carolina University. From 1917 to 1921, he served as principle of three different public schools. Between the years 1920 and 1926, he served as registrar of deeds of Jackson County. He was a member of the County Board of Elections and actively served the Democratic Party. When Nicholson wrote this letter, he was probably working with Mead Corporation or the C.J. Harris Community Hospital as an accountant. Fourteen years after he wrote this letter, he was appointed to state senate where he served in 1955 and 1956 (Jackson County Genealogical Society).

Dan Tompkins was born in Webster, NC in 1890. He graduated from high school in Waynesville and studied law at Wake Forest College. The Jackson County Journal started in 1906, and Tompkins became the editor in chief in 1912. He served in the military in 1917 and 1918 during World War I, during which time he was part of the offensive that broke the Hindenburg line at Ballicourt, France (Jackson County Genealogical Society). After his honorable discharge, Tompkins returned to his job at the Journal and was elected Mayor of Sylva as a Democrat. He was Jackson County’s representative to the General Assembly in 1933, 1939, and 1943.

Robert Rice Reynolds was born in Asheville in 1884. An avid traveler from a young age, Reynolds was known to send back post cards from all over the world and to boast of having “circled the globe more than a dozen times” (Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society). He wrote two books titled Wanderlust and Gypsy Trails. Reynolds held many occupations including coaching, wrestling, news reporting, babysitting, practicing law, and even managing a roller skating rink. He got his law degree at Chapel Hill in 1906 and was elected district prosecutor in 1910. In 1932, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he was serving at the time this letter was written.

It is unknown why Nicholson would have been to have been writing on Sylva Supply Company stationary. I found no association between him and the company. This note, in and of its self, is as mundane as it appears, but contextually it is something more interesting. It is a note about an influential man, from one influential man to another.
Sometimes a manuscript’s handwriting can make editing a challenge. That was not the case with this letter. Nicholson’s handwriting was exceptionally good. In fact, Joyce Nicholson Evans reported to the Jackson County Genealogical Society, “[M]any people still comment on his unusual and neat penmanship” (Jackson County Genealogical Society). That skill, which I’m sure served him well during his six years as Jackson County’s registrar of deeds, made my job that much easier with this project.

I entered onto a new line whenever the body of the letter reached a new line, because I wanted to stay true to its original form.

Regarding the letterhead: Since this document was written on branded stationary, some of the information was printed on the paper before the note itself was written. I decided to type that information as part of the transcript, but to italicize it so that it is distinct from the note itself.
RAYMOND R. NICHOLSON’S LETTER TO DAN TOMPKINS

E. L. NIEKE

C. SCOTT

SYLVA SUPPLY COMPANY, INC.
.... Merchants ....

Sylva, N.C. Sept. 19, 1941.

Dear Dan:

You very clearly expressed my sentiments in your editorial "Ignorant North Carolina." Every word is in exact line with my thinking and while I can't express it in such clear terms, I saw them such thoughts as you brought out. If Bob ever goes back to the Senate, it will be through no management of mine. I'm through with him and not only that, I'm ashamed that I even sponsored his cause in his first campaign.

Your other editorials are equally as good and I feel are doing much good at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond R. Nicholson
Dear Dan: ³
You very clearly expressed my sentiments in your editorial “Ignorant North Carolina”. ⁴ Every word is in exact line with my thinking and while I can’t express it in such clear terms, I can think such thoughts as you brought out.

1 Ernest Lyndon McKee was one of the owners of Sylva Supply Company. He was a son of Gertrude Dills McKee, the first woman to serve in the North Carolina Senate. Her father, William Allen Dills, was actually the founder of Dillsboro (Beck).

2 The Sylva Supply Company opened in 1898 and was one of only three stores in Sylva at the time. The other two were Mack Fowler’s General Merchandise and A.B. Dill’s store. Sylva Supply served as a general store for local workers, who used their work coupons (Bell 172).

3 Dan Tompkins, born 1890, was an influential figure in Western North Carolina, especially around Sylva (Austin). He served as the editor of the Jackson County Journal from 1912 until 1943 – except for during the period of 1917-18, when he volunteered for the military during World War I (“Special Collections”). Tompkins was Jackson County’s Representative to the General Assembly in 1933, 1939, and 1943. He was the reading clerk in the House of Representatives for a time, and he served multiple terms as the mayor of Sylva starting in 1919 (Jackson County Genealogical Society 456).

4 In this Jackson County Journal editorial, published September 8 1941, Tompkins scolds Senator Robert Rice Reynolds for inviting Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh to come to North Carolina and make a speech. The full editorial can be read in Appendix A of this document (Tompkins).
If Bob\(^5\) ever goes back to the Senate, it will be through no management of mine. I’m through with him and not only that, i’m ashamed that I ever sponsored his cause in his first campaign.\(^6\) Your other editorials are equally as good and I feel are doing much good at this time

Yours sincerely,

Raymond R. Nicholson\(^7\)

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\(^5\) Robert Rice Reynolds, born 1884, served two terms as a U.S. senator representing North Carolina starting in 1932. He was known for being a traveler, claiming to have been around the world more than twelve times. Ironically, Reynolds won the 1932 election by criticizing his opponent for being too cultured, and claiming that he himself was satisfied with the simple North Carolina lifestyle. (Old Buncombe County 309). He was in his second term at the time this editorial and letter were written.

\(^6\) Tompkins, Reynolds, and Nicholson all served the Democratic party in their respective offices (Jackson County Genealogical Society, Old Buncombe County).

\(^7\) Raymond Rockhill Nicholson, born 1898, served many occupations throughout his lifetime. He earned the nickname, “Prof,” during his time teaching, and served as registrar of deeds in Jackson County, holding office from 1920 to 1926. Nicholson was also member of the County Board of Elections. In 1955, he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the state senate, where he served from 1955 to 1956 (Jackson County Genealogical Society 367).
Works Cited
Special Collections Accession Form. Western Carolina University Special and Digital Collections, Hunter Library MSS 80-14.
APPENDIX A

THE JACQUES COUNTY JOURNAL, TUESDAY, SEPT. 30, 1941

EDITORIAL
THAT BELGIAN NAVY

Because the rest of us have failed to give a proper and untrammelled impetus of hope for the past twenty years, the past has been a period of many deep-seated and very considerable changes in world conditions, and because a minority group in a great many countries, including our own, is just blotted out, theORIZING the powers of peace and invasion, and therefore playing in the hands of the Nazi regime, the Germans apparently think that the whole world is engaged in sending or is ready to take action that will be presented by Berlin, no matter how ill-considered.

As we have seen, the use of the present position in the area of the United States, we are not unprepared to do the fighting outside the area of the United States. This is not to say that we are not unprepared, but it is to say that we are not unprepared.

The Germans have been working for a major offensive against Britain in the Black Sea. Germany has faced its neighbors, for this area. This is not to say that they are not facing their neighbors, but it is to say that they are not facing their neighbors.

The Germans have been working for a major offensive against Britain, and are facing their neighbors, for this area. This is not to say that they are not facing their neighbors, but it is to say that they are not facing their neighbors.

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