

Emily Weigle to Dan Tompkins

June 16, 1924

MSS 80-14-4

Transcribed and Annotated by
Grant McMillan

For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English

Western Carolina University

Instructor: Dr. Brian Gastle

10 December 2018

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

This transcription was created from the original manuscript of Emily Weigle's letter to Dan Tompkins on June 16, 1924. In the letter, Emily comments on some of the events around Dan's hometown, Sylva, NC, as observed from her reading of the newspapers from that area. She mentions several specific columns from that week's *Jackson County Journal*, of which Dan was the editor. Emily then discusses some of the events in her life, including developments in her job as a school teacher in her hometown of Augusta, GA.

Weigle was born on October 2, 1898. She attended Augusta Training School for two years and graduated in May of 1920, receiving her teaching certificate in the state of Georgia (WCU Special Collections MSS 80-14). She began her career as a grade school teacher in Augusta, GA, where she lived with her family for much of her life before moving to Sylva, NC, around 1931. She continued to teach into the latter years of her life before dying on August 12, 1959 at age 60.

Dan was born on August 15, 1890. He was active in local politics and news and served as the editor of the *Jackson County Journal* for 31 years, beginning in 1912. He also served as the mayor of Sylva for 12 years and served in the North Carolina House of Representatives for three terms. He was a member of the North Carolina Democratic Party and continued his public service throughout his life before dying on September 15, 1950 at age 60.

It is clear from the tone and content of the letter that Emily and Dan had a personal connection by June 1924. Unlike many letters that Dan received, Emily's letter is not about political requests; it is simply about sharing daily thoughts, as two people in a relationship would. There is a sense of familiarity in the way that Emily addresses Dan, expressing disappointment at not having heard from him in a long time and even wondering if he has been seduced by another woman. This tone of familiarity is also clear when Emily closes her letter by saying "When you are interested enough, drop me a line." Her polite annoyance is an indication that the two had some kind of established personal correspondence with one another by this time.

Emily and Dan met sometime during the early 1920's when she was vacationing in Sylva with some of Dan's relatives and they maintained correspondence for several years afterwards. Dan first proposed to Emily on Christmas Day, 1926; however, they were not married until five years later on June 23, 1931, when Dan was age 41 and Emily was age 33 (Austin 21). The couple had no children; however, interviews with family members indicate that the two had a strong and adoring marriage in the 19 years before Dan's death on September 15, 1950 (Austin 22).

Editor's Note

This is a diplomatic edition of Emily Weigle's letter to Dan Tompkins. As such, the text has been transcribed to recreate the original manuscript in appearance and style. Spelling and punctuation were left unchanged. This does not affect the readability of this particular letter as Emily had a firm grasp of grammatical conventions. Paragraph indents have been recreated from the manuscript and a small space was added between paragraphs to aid readability. Line spacing of 1.5 was used for readability purposes as well. The placement of the date and location of the letter has also been recreated from the original. This edition uses page breaks to signal the end of each page in the original manuscript. The page from the manuscript that each page of this edition corresponds to is signaled by the pagination at the top of the page (MS page #). Footnotes are used to provide background information in a way that is unobtrusive and easy to access. Sources for the footnotes are listed on the works cited page.

The original letter was written on the front and back of two pieces of plain, off white paper approximately eight inches tall and four inches wide. The creases of the paper indicate that the letter was folded into quarters in order to fit in an envelope. The words were written in plain black ink with very few smears and very little blotting. The letter was written in neat cursive and is easily readable. The clean handwriting pairs with the clear and precise diction that Emily employs throughout the letter.

The original manuscript is held by Western Carolina University Special Collections.

Transcription

[MS page 1]

Augusta, GA

June 16, 1924

Dear Dan,

I certainly am proud of the splendid race you ran. It surely was close. You know the best man is very often whipped. I thought it was great that the people of Sylva gave you such a strong backing.¹

I received the Asheville Citizen² Saturday morning. The pictures of the High Hampton³ were lovely. I know it is going to be a lovely resort.

Dan, I was rather disappointed when I opened the envelope and found not a single word written by you. I haven't heard from you in such a long, long time. I fear someone has vamped⁴ you. I have been wondering who it was, and I believe that last week's Journal⁵ disclosed the secret, why, Miss Cobb⁶ of course. My! But she

¹ Dan Tompkins participated in the democratic nomination race for NC state senator in 1924. He lost to T.C. Bryson by a margin of 92 votes. Specific vote totals can be viewed on page 1 of the June 13, 1924 *Jackson County Journal*.

² *The Asheville Citizen* was a daily newspaper founded in 1870. Its primary focus was conservative and democratic politics and economic progress in the local Appalachian region. For more information, see "Asheville Citizen-Times" in the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*.

³ The High Hampton property was originally purchased by General Wade Hampton III in the 1830's. In 1922, E.L. McKee purchased the property and opened it as The High Hampton Inn. He ran the resort alongside his wife, Gertrude Dills, who was North Carolina's first female state legislator. The property was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 and operates as The High Hampton Resort as of December 2018. More information about the property's background can be found in "McKee, Gertrude Dills" in the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* and on the High Hampton Resort's website.

⁴ "Vamped" was sometimes used as slang for "seduced" during the 1920's (OED.com).

⁵ *The Jackson County Journal* was a weekly news publication that Dan Tompkins served as the editor of for 31 years, beginning in 1912.

⁶ Beatrice Cobb was a democratic party leader and the editor of *The Morganton News Herald*. Page 4 of the June 13, 1924 copy of *The Jackson County Journal* contains a quote from her referring to Dan Tompkins as a "fine all around fellow," which appears to be what Emily is referring to. More information about Miss Cobb can be found at "Cobb, Beatrice" in the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*.

can hand out the bouquets.

We are planning to leave two weeks from today. We may make the trip in a day, I hope so for I hate to stay over. I may not come though for I don't believe I'm wanted by everybody. Write and let me know.

Well, school¹ closed Friday, and I fear that my work in the kindergarten² is forever ended, for the kindergarten assistants are going to be replaced by pianists. I understand that we are to be put in grades but where they are going to find the vacancies I don't know. I'm going to see Mr. Evans³ about it tomorrow. I guess it will turn out all right.

Dan, I was very much interested in reading about the Pan American delegation.⁴ It must have been a tremendous undertaking to entertain them. Sylva is getting to be quite

¹ Emily received her public-school teaching certificate for Georgia in 1920 after completing her required coursework. She worked as a teacher at Hill School in Richmond County, GA, where she was one of 9 teachers. Original manuscripts of Emily's professional documents can be found at Western Carolina University Special Collections in the Dan Tompkins box (MSS 80-14 folders 1-24).

² Emily taught second grade at Hill School in 1921 and 1922, kindergarten in 1923 and 1924, and first grade in 1924 and 1925. For more information, see Dan Tompkins' folders in Western Carolina University Special Collections.

³ Unknown person. He was likely someone in an administrative position at Emily's school.

⁴ The Pan American Highway Commission was a delegation of representatives from many South American governments. The purpose of the commission was for the United States to work with South American countries during the construction of a highway system spanning the Americas. The delegation embarked on a tour across the east coast of the United States during the summer of 1924 and stopped in Sylva on June 10. The then secretary of commerce, Herbert Hoover, was in attendance along with the governors of each state adjacent to NC. For more information, see page 1 of the April 4, 1924 and page 1 of the June 13, 1924 editions of *The Jackson County Journal*.

an important place.

Gardiner¹ arrived Wednesday, we are so glad to have him back with us. This afternoon we went to Plunket's² bathing pond, after Gardiner had had a dip we rode down the lane and across the new bridge. You should see it since it has been completed.

Ruth and Marion³ left yesterday for summer school at Asheville. I think maybe I'll spend a week with them.

Has Ned⁴ arrived? If not, when do you expect her?

I hear you have a piano for the summer. I think that's so nice.

Well, the day for the wedding is drawing near. I guess everything at your house is in a hustle and bustle.

Well, Dan, I must close. When

¹ Emily had a younger brother named Gardiner who was born in 1905. She is likely referring to this brother. More information about members of the Weigle family can be found in the 1920 US Census on *ancestrylibrary.com*.

² Unknown person. It is likely that Plunkett was a friend of the Weigle family.

³ Unknown persons. Emily indicates that Ruth and Marion are attending summer school. Because Emily was a teacher, it is likely the two were friends of hers who were also teachers.

⁴ Unknown person. No records were found of anyone in Emily or Dan's immediate family with the name "Ned" or any alternate form of it.

[MS page 4]

you are interested enough drop me a line.

Give each one of the folks my love.

Always,

Emily.

Works Cited

- Austin, Suelle Reece. *Dan Tompkins: Mountain Editor*. MA Thesis, Western Carolina University, 1966.
- Board of Education. Emily Weigle's Teaching Certificate. June 1920. Western Carolina University Special and Digital Collections, Hunter Library MSS 80-14 folders 1-24.
- Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, edited by William Powell, 2006. *NCpedia*.
<https://www.ncpedia.org/>.
- Hill School. Emily Weigle's Employment Records. 1926. Western Carolina University Special and Digital Collections, Hunter Library MSS 80-14 folders 1-24.
- Library of Congress*. US Bureau of Public Roads, 1924, <https://www.loc.gov>.
- National Register of Historic Places*, High Hampton Inn – Historic District, Jackson County, NC, #91001468, <https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>.
- OED Online*, Oxford University Press, 2018, www.oed.com.
- The Jackson County Journal*, edited by Dan Tompkins, 13 June 1924, p. 1+. *Historic North Carolina Digital Newspaper Collection*, <http://newscomnc.newspapers.com>.
- . 4 April 1924, p. 1.
- United States Department of Commerce - Census Bureau. *14th Census of the United States; Augusta GA, 1920, Ancestry Library Edition*, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com>.
- Weigle, Emily. Letter to Dan Tompkins. 16 June 1924. Western Carolina University Special and Digital Collections, Hunter Library MSS 80-14-4.