

Emily Weigle's Letter to Dan Tompkins

March 20th, 1927

Hunter Library MSS 80-14, Folder 2

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

This edition is created from the manuscript of Emily Weigle's letter to Daniel "Dan" Tompkins on March 20th, 1927. This letter is one of number of others that the two wrote back and forth to each another while Weigle lived in Augusta, Georgia, and Tompkins lived in Sylva, North Carolina. The contents of the letter suggest an on-again, off-again relationship between the two, as Emily is close to Dan, discussing the events of his life at the time, but also states that she is not willing to marry him in his then-current financial state.

Emily Weigle was born on October 2nd, 1898. She lived with her family in Augusta, Georgia at 2429 McDonell Street in Ward 6 with her parents James and Kate, and her younger siblings Gardiner and Kate Louise. She began teaching Second Grade in 1920 in Richmond County at Hill Elementary. She attended Houghton Elementary in 1903 to 1912 and then Tubman High School in 1912 to 1916. After graduating in 1916, she attended Shorter College in Rome, Georgia before transferring to Augusta Training School for Teachers in 1918 to 1920, where she received her Certificate of Training in June of 1920. She began teaching at Hill Elementary starting with Second Grade for her first two years, followed by Kindergarten for two years, and then First Grade for another two years. In 1926, she began teaching Third Grade when the school itself built a new school building, as noted in her letter to Dan. While teaching, she also attended a summer school session for six weeks in Asheville, North Carolina in 1922, and then attended Emory College for extension training in 1924 to 1925. In September of 1931, Emily Weigle Tompkins received her Teachers Life Certificate of Georgia, which stated that she was authorized to teach in any of the public elementary or high schools of the State from the date it was signed. On September 5th 1932, she signed a teacher's contract for Jackson County at Sylva Elementary school, presumably because she and Dan became married and moved in with one another. (MSS 80-14, Folder 24, Dan Tompkins 1890-1950 Collection, Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University).

The letter's recipient, Daniel "Dan" Dean Tompkins, was born in 1891. He lived in Sylva, North Carolina where he maintained a newspaper plant, the *Jackson County Journal* at the time this letter to him was written. Emily mentions in the letter that the paper was partisan in the articles that it published, which aligns with Dan's political interests, where he would run of various offices in North Carolina as a Democrat in the future. (Austin, "Dan Tompkins: Mountain Editor).

While the two would eventually become married years after this letter was written, she addressed her concerns about his newspaper possibly being sold, and the debt he had accrued, asking him to settle all of it, before she found him to be suitable for marriage. Emily's concerns about his struggles, her extended education, and her statement that she would not marry until Dan could provide a life that was equal or better than her life as being unmarried, shows that she was a caring but also disciplined and confident.

EDITORS NOTE

This edition of Emily Weigle's letter to Daniel "Dan" Tompkins consists of the combined features of the facsimile and the diplomatic formats to provide an accurate description of the contents of the letter. The text is transcribed in accordance to the page in which it appears on the documents, as it is four pages long in total. The placement of the header, greeting, and sign off will be formatted to replicate that of the original document. Paragraph indentations are also formatted in the same manner as is written by Emily.

The document is written on blank white paper that is mostly written by pen, but the writer acknowledges the switch to pencil at the end, due to low ink levels in her pen. Emily writes the letter in cursive handwriting and uses traditional indentations at the beginning of each new paragraph.

While the writing in the document is legible, there are a couple of errors or style choices within the letter that are worth mentioning.

- On the first page, probably through proofreading by Emily, edited in pencil the addition of "going to be" on the sixth line. Here she is discussing if a new paper will be started in Sylva, North Carolina in relation to the Sylva Journal and the financial issues it was facing.
- On the last page, Emily writes about the upcoming weekend, but uses a hyphen between week and end, writing it as "week-end."
- On the last page, there appears to be a missing comma in the sentence "Of course Gardiner was delighted."
- Throughout the letter, sentence fragments occur frequently.
- The use of contractions is common.
- In the last statement in the letter, Emily underlines "my" in her P.S. to draw attention to her specific "story."
- Pages are not numbered by the writer.

Within the letter, Emily writes about people and events that have been identified in this transcription process. Some of the individuals mentioned have been identified in their relationships to Emily and Dan, while other identifications are speculative based on information found through research. Some names remain unidentified.

TRANSCRIPTION

Augusta, GA

Mar. 20, 1927

Dear Dan,¹

Your special was received yesterday. I'm sorry that you've been worrying about your business.² I hope that it is nothing but talk as Mr. Ensley³ says. If a new paper is (going to be) started and they'll pay you a fair price for your plant, I suppose the wise thing to do will be to sell; but I know that you'll never be happy doing anything but newspaper work, and I always want you to be your own boss. Couldn't you make your paper a non-partisan⁴ paper? I think that you are doing fairly well financially,

¹ Daniel "Dan" Dean Tompkins, born in 1891 in Sylva, North Carolina. He was the mayor of Sylva in 1921-1924 and again in 1931.

² Editor of the Jackson County Journal for 31 years before leaving to become involved in politics.

³ It is speculated that Mr. Ensley is John Bowen Ensley (referred to as J.B. Ensley in the paper), born in 1862, a frequent advertiser who published ads in the Sylva Journal.

⁴ Dan Tompkins was a Democrat, in which some of the articles in the paper reflected his political views.

but I also think that it will be a long, long time before you are in a position to marry. I'm not going to marry you until you are able to give me as good as I now have and possibly better. Don't worry about it, just do the best you can. If you are successful in collecting your debts, please try to pay your debts, house included. I think that a person makes a mistake to keep debts hanging over him. Won't you promise me that what you collect you'll put on to the house and the plant? Pay them up and feel free. Dan, I prayed last night that God would direct you in your business affairs and I believe that He will.

We have moved into our new school⁵. I like it very much. I feel so free to be able to walk across the back of the room. The rooms have splendid cabinets and cloaks closets. We are also having good old summer-time weather. Cooler weather is predicted for tonight but I believe the weather man made a mistake.

Wednesday afternoon Agnes Flythe,⁶ Rosalie,⁷ and Kathryn⁸ are going to ride with me. I thought that I would take them through the gardens that Miss Sadie⁹ and Miss Ad¹⁰ went through. They should be prettier now than they were then.

⁵ In 1926, Hill Elementary School opened a new building for the students. Emily taught at Hill Elementary since beginning her teaching career in 1920 until she moved to Sylva, North Carolina after becoming married.

⁶ Agnes Flythe, born in 1897, fellow resident of Augusta, Georgia.

⁷ Rosalie is an unknown individual and there is no census data that can be found.

⁸ Kathryn is an unknown individual and there is no census data that can be found.

⁹ Miss Sadie Luck, born in 1878. She is aunt to Dan Tompkins, sister to Addie Luck and Annie Tompkins. She took over as editor for the Jackson County Journal when Dan became involved in politics.

¹⁰ Miss Addie, referred to as Miss Ad in the letter, was born in 1870. She is aunt to Dan Tompkins, sister to Sadie Luck and Annie Tompkins.

Papa planted some of the garden yesterday.

Have you planted yours?

I like the new head for the paper.

Annie B.¹¹ has been here for the week-end. Of course Gardiner¹² was delighted.

You must excuse the change from pen to pencil but papa had to go to a Quarterly Conference meeting this afternoon so I took my writing materials down to write while he was there and the link gave out.

Well, Dan, write when you have time. I'm so glad that you tell me your business affairs.

Much Love,

Emily

P.S. What have you heard from my story?¹³

¹¹ Annie B. is an unknown individual and there is no census data that can be found.

¹² Gardiner Weigle born in 1905, is Emily's younger brother and son of James G. Weigle and Kate Hill Weigle.

¹³ It is speculated that Emily wrote an article for the Jackson County Journal and is waiting to hear feedback about it. The newspaper did not always post the names of the columns it published.

Works Cited

Austin, Suelle Reece. "Dan Tompkins: Mountain Editor." 1966. Western Carolina University, Masters thesis.

This dissertation provided information about Dan and his aunt Miss Sadie, who was interviewed about him and his life. It discusses the financial struggles that Dan and the Jackson County Journal had and that Miss Sadie took over as editor when Dan entered into politics.

Emily's letter to Dan Tompkins, March 20th, 1927. MSS 80-14, Folder 2. Dan Tompkins (1890-1950) Collection. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28723 <https://wcu.lyrasistechology.org/repositories/2/resources/348> Accessed December 10, 2018.

This is the primary source for the transcription process. The letter reveals several names that were researched and put into context Emily and Dan's relationship status at the time of the letter was written.

Georgia. US Census Department. "Augusta Ward 1, Richmond, Georgia." Sixteenth Census of the United States. Augusta, GA: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1940. Ancestry.com. 7 Dec. 2018.

This census record provided information about Agnes Flythe including her date of birth, and residence.

Georgia. US Census Department. "Augusta Ward 6, Richmond, Georgia." Fourteenth Census of the United States. Augusta, GA: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1920. Ancestry.com. 7 Dec. 2018.

This census record provided information about Emily Weigle including her date of birth, occupation, and residence.

Georgia. US Census Department. "Augusta Ward 6, Richmond, Georgia." Fourteenth Census of the United States. Augusta, GA: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1920. Ancestry.com. 7 Dec. 2018.

This census record provided information about Gardiner Weigle including his date of birth, and residence.

“John Bowen Ensley.” Find A Grave, www.findagrave.com/memorial/45772247.

This record of Death provided date of birth, date of death, and information of immediate family.

North Carolina. US Census Department. “Sylva, Jackson, North Carolina.” Sixteenth Census of the United States. Sylva, NC: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1940.

Ancestry.com. 7 Dec. 2018.

This census record provided information about Sadie S. Luck including her date of birth, occupation, and residence.

North Carolina. US Census Department. “Sylva, Jackson, North Carolina.” Sixteenth Census of the United States. Sylva, NC: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1940.

Ancestry.com. 7 Dec. 2018.

This census record provided information about Addie V. Luck including her date of birth, and residence.

North Carolina. Birth Indexes, 1800-2000. “Sylva, Jackson, North Carolina.” Register of Deeds. North Carolina Birth Indexes. Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina State Archives. 1890.

Ancestry.com. 7 Dec. 2018.

This census record provided information about Daniel Dean Tompkins including his date of birth, names of parents, and residence.

“Sylva Town History.” Town History - Sylva, NC, sylvanc.govoffice3.com/?SEC=73FBAB7A-2385-4EDD-A144-0E8237EADCF4.

This source has the names of former mayors of the town and the years that they were in office.

Teacher’s Certificates of Mrs. Dan Tompkins, 1920-1932. MSS 80-14, Folder 24. Dan Tompkins (1890-1950) Collection. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28723

<https://wcu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/2/resources/348> Accessed December 10, 2018.

All of Emily’s information about her education history and teaching certificates were used from this folder in WCU’s Special Collections. This is used in the introduction to serve as biographical information about Emily and build a timeline of her life.