

Physical Description: 32 letters; 8 miscellaneous items (1 in duplicate);
1 photograph; 8 envelopes

Acquisition: Gift of Mrs. Karl S. (Dorothy) Vickers, Jr., Winston-Salem, N.C.
April 6, 1988.

Division of Archives and Manuscripts
State Department of Archives and History
Raleigh, North Carolina

Description: This small collection of letters, all but four of which are addressed to Martha Elizabeth Blalock Vickers between 1878 and 1904, reflect a mother's memories of helplessness and tears. The essential correspondence in the collection relates to her marriage (over family opposition) to M. Modd Vickers, a teacher in the Durham County schools. During 1884, Vickers apparently gave up teaching and lived in Reidsville where he ran a saloon, but teachers' certificates dated 1886 and 1888 suggest that he resumed his teaching career in Durham County. It appears, further, that he disposed of the Reidsville saloon and invested in one in Greensboro. The latter, located in the Adams Building, was run by a manager in 1886 while Vickers returned to Durham. In 1888, Vickers removed his family to Winston, N.C., and sometime between the years 1893 and 1899 was killed while performing duty as a police officer. The death of the father appears to have had an adverse effect on the elder of the two sons, Cabot, and three of the letters relate to his misadventures between 1899 and 1904. Mrs. Vickers ultimately remarried, this time to a Winston-Salem retail grocer named F. H. Wallington.

Correspondence:

1878 June-December. Sixteen prenuptial letters of M. Modd Vickers and Martha Elizabeth Blalock ("Darling Lizzy"), commencing with the renewal of their engagement and ending on the eve of their marriage. (Their marriage entry in the Orange County marriage register under date of Dec. 12, 1878, reports her age as 20 and his as 23; their marriage took place in the Baptist Church at Durham and was celebrated by the Rev. C. Durham.) Although the couple had been engaged to be married prior to the beginning of this correspondence, the opposition of the Blalock family to the match had led to the engagement being broken off. In these letters, Modd Vickers begins the correspondence by asking that the engagement be renewed. She agrees to the proposal, and will join in an exchange of correspondence and photographs, but he must not call on her at home. She urges that their go-between, Ezra,

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be very careful with their correspondence. He replies that he had not intended, could not be ready, to be married for perhaps two years, but "these disturbances" force him to change his plans; asks if they can be married before the end of the year. She then proposes December 15 as their marriage date, and suggests that they meet clandestinely. A couple of the letters mention the home of an aunt and uncle where they can meet safely. In August he reveals that part of his family, too, are opposed to the marriage, and became so "after your folks became opposed and talked the way they have." In September he declares it his duty to speak to Mrs. Blalock about the intended marriage "whether she answers me or not," and reiterates this in October when he declares he doesn't "want any stealing or unning away in the case." Elizabeth finally consents on October 18 for him to speak to her mother, and offers to speak to her, herself, as well. In November they express preferences for times for the wedding ceremony (he on a week night, she on a Sunday morning); she leaves the arrangements to him, for she intends to say nothing to her family. The last letter, December 1, 1878, concerns arrangements for the wedding, set for 6:00 p.m., and who shall be "waiters" at the wedding.

1883 Jan 5. One letter, A. B. Fortune, Swannanoa, to Vickers & Bros., Durham, hoping to find hands for work that he is commencing on the Danville and New River railway; can send more cabbage if they need more.

1884 Apr 23 - Sept. 12. Five letters addressed to Lizzie Vickers, one from her cousin, Julia, one from her mother (on family topics), and three from her husband. Those from her husband, now running M. Modd Vickers' Saloon in Reidsville, relate to their removal from Durham to Reidsville and instruct her on disposition of furniture (part of proceeds to defray funeral expenses) and press her to write to him.

1888 Dec 1. Modd Vickers, Winston, to his wife Lizzie Vickers. Family matters, instructions on clothing purchases, disposition of furniture and moving. Says the Rev. Mr. Brown of the Baptist Church, who has paid a call, has the reputation of a "noble and good man".

1891 Nov 17. J. L. Trice, Portland Hotel, Portland, Oregon, to Dear Uncle Modd. On the subject of his sister Nettie and plans for her attendance at Salem Academy, and asking his uncle to guard against her correspondence with boys of a certain stamp (naming some of them).

1893. Two letters.

July 1. M. M. Vickers, Winston, to Dear Sir, enclosing a note for \$19.60 to be signed and returned.

August 26. Cora Whitaker, Durham, to Cabot Vickers, Winston, N.C. A chatty boy/girl letter.

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1899. Three letters, all addressed to Mrs. Vickers, Winston, N.C.

August 6. R. D. Blalock, Durham, N.C., to "Dear Sister"—giving family messages and news of a picnic.

Nov. 11. Cabot M. Vickers, Salisbury, N.C., to "Dear Mother". Admits he has told her an untrue story; there is a warrant out for him and Ronnie Lassiter. Thinks he can get a job in the railroad yard, and is going to lead a better life. "I left for my own good. I could not stand to be locked up again. Don't send me my clothes until you hear from me again. ... Address me as J. B. Kerr."

Nov. 16. J. W. Vickers, North Wilkesboro, to Mrs. Lizzie Vickers, Winston, enclosing a press cutting from the Raleigh Daily Morning Post "giving an account of some of Cabot's conduct" (charged with theft). Speaks of Cabot's "poor murdered father who lies in the cemetery in Winston-Salem", wishes he could rise from the dead to confront his son, and asks what is going to become of this son who has had four charges of theft brought against him.

1904 Nov 18. Cabot Vickers, Norfolk, Va., to Dear Mother, explaining how he came to beat senseless his girl friend, a mill worker named Emma.

n.y. Aug 24. Jane Gun, Durham, to Dear Lizzie, on family matters and the condition of their father.

Miscellaneous:

- 1886 Contract of R. S. Ryan to manage M. M. Vickers' saloon, Greensboro
- 1886, 1888 Teachers' certificates of M. Modd Vickers, Durham County
- 1894 Fourth Grade report, Winston Public Schools, of Karl Vickers
- 1891 Printed form letter, and contribution envelopes, from the Finance Committee, First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem
- 1936 Printed "Moravian Church History in Question and Answer" by Bishop Rights.
- n.d. One photograph of unidentified children sitting on porch steps.
- n.d. One Mothers' Day card.
- n.d. One MS of sentimental lines beginning, "I'll remember you love in my prayers"

Five empty envelopes unrelated to any of the letters present.

Subject entries

Courtship
Wedding etiquette
Love letters
Saloons
Salem College
Moravians
Vickers family
Vickers, M. Modd
Vickers, Elizabeth Blalock

Geographic entries

Durham County
Forsyth County