

Cherokee Nation
Chief Wilma Mankiller
P.O. Box 948
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

3-15-94
Received
Kay Clark
841 Clinton Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa 50313
(515)-282-1872

March 1, 1994

Dear Chief Mankiller,

I am writing to you today with the hope that you can assist me in obtaining information about the Cherokee Nation, and the roles women have played in the history of the Cherokee Tribe. I am attending the Des Moines Area Community College located in Des Moines, Iowa. I am writing a research paper on this subject.

My reasons for choosing this subject are many. First, I am a proud descendent of the Cherokee. My grandmother was Delilah Cookson-Craig, of Braggs, Oklahoma. Many of our relatives still live in Tahlequah, Cookson, and surrounding counties in eastern Oklahoma. I am regretful that I did not learn more about our heritage from my grandmother and other relatives as I was growing up. My father, Clyde Craig, moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, when I was a small child, two years of age.

I was always eager to visit with my grandmother, even though the visits came only once or so every year, and lasted two weeks or less each time. She was a wonderful lady that took great pride in who she was. She dealt with a great many disappointments in her lifetime, all of which were very painful, and frustrating I am sure. Her strength and endurance impressed me early on, and I quickly realized this was a woman I would want to emulate. She was constantly called upon by the community for various services and never failed the task. She enjoyed assisting in any deed that would benefit her neighbor, and was responsible for the successful deliveries of many births in the area, as I understand.

My grandmother, in her mid-nineties, passed away in the spring of 1982. My father, her son, passed away the following year. Of the eleven live births, only one of her children remain alive. I have always been thirsty for knowledge about our heritage, and as the aunts and uncles have passed, I am finding, to my disappointment, that my sources for this information are running out. I have two grown sons and numerous nieces and nephews that I would love to share this information with.

My second reason, is that I am extremely proud of the job you have done representing the Cherokee Nation. I have limited knowledge of everything you have accomplished. I had the pleasure of watching you appear on the "Home Show" a few years ago when you were selected "Woman of the Year." It gave me a great sense of pride, and I felt that you represented not only yourself, but the Cherokee Nation, and my home state, Oklahoma, very well.

I have read several articles in which your name has been associated, and they have all been very positive. I am not a liberated woman in the negative sense, but rather a woman that was taught that women can achieve any goal, no matter how difficult, if they work toward that goal. I have great pride in the fact that a woman has not only taken this role, but has successfully challenged, and contributed to it, a great many positive changes that will benefit the people of the Cherokee Nation for years to come. I know this position came to you after many years of hard work and dedication.