

2-28-94
received

Feb 20 1994

Wilma Mankiller
Chief of the Cherokee Nation
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Wilma -
I'm really
disappointed
that we
haven't
met yet.
W

Dear Wilma,

I call you Wilma instead of Chief Mankiller, because after reading your book my only introduction to you, I feel that I have known you all of my life. Maybe its because our lives have paralleled each other in so many ways, most important our Cherokee heritage. You see my grandmother was Cherokee.

I have been researching my grandmother life for several years. Your book gave me more insight into her history and therefore my own. I was very connected to her which may be how I could so strongly identify with you and your struggles. In many ways they were my own. It was so strange when I showed your picture on the book to one of my sons, he commented that, we look alike.

I often wondered where I got my spirit, courage and tenacity, I now believe its my Cherokee blood. The more I read of Cherokee history in your book of surviving insurmountable odds and going on the more I knew it came from Rosa Garris (Red Wing, I was told by her son was her Indian name). We called her Nana. Nana died in 1946. The information I have is her father was a Cherokee and her mother was a black woman. It appears it going to be a difficult task to trace as few if any records as you know were kept, but I will continue the search. After hearing you speak on a radio show in New York, I'm following your suggestion and going to North Carolina this summer. Nana was born in Wadsboro N.C.

I would like to sincerely thank you for sharing your courage, strength, talent, abilities and spirit with me and the rest of the world. I would like to one day visit with you in Oklahoma, and sit on your porch and just talk of the past, present and future. As I said earlier in this letter we are close in age. I celebrated my 58th birthday the other day. After reading your book, I thought to myself, what about retiring in Oklahoma and working with Wilma? I have lived in a world much like your own filled with poverty but have managed to improve my life and that of my childrens. I returned to school as you did and earned a Masters Degree in Social Work and have learned