

December 7, 2022

Dear Mr. Harold Keith,

Last year, my siblings and I read your books *Rifles for Watie*, *Obstinate Land*, and *Will Rogers: A Boy's Life*. *Rifles for Watie* had a deep impact on me as a boy growing up in eastern Oklahoma. It ignited my love for history and made me want to learn more about the Civil War.

I thought it was great that so many of the places that were mentioned in the book I knew or have been to. Every time I go to Tahlequah now, I think about the Union Troops marching through there so long ago. My parents took me to the Honey Springs Battlefield reenactment, and when the cavalry charged and the cannons boomed, I thought about how the main character Jeff was back at camp holding the horses, missing out on the battle!

Not many books have Cherokee characters in them, and I liked that they were portrayed in a positive light. In particular, Confederate Brigadier General Stand Watie I found a connection with. Through the Family Tree app, I discovered that one of my ancestors was a part of the Ridge Party and had signed the Treaty of New Echota along with Stand. My favorite chapter in the book was when the Cherokee Confederates attacked the steamboat because it would have been exciting to see that in real life. Even though Stand did choose the losing side of the Civil War, I feel like he was good leader. I really want to go to visit his grave near Grove someday.

Your book made me see that each state had its own reasons being in the war, especially Indian Territory. Since they had Confederate States to the east and south, and Union to the north, they were in a bad position, and remaining neutral was not an option. It is a good thing that the North won, because America would have been split in half. America is physically united still and hopefully it will never get to the point that we are fighting each other again.

There is a saying that books can take you places. Well, your book *Rifles for Watie* put me on a path to be a part of a cannon crew at the Prairie Grove Battle Reenactment where I got to be powder monkey! Being around other people that love history just as much as I do, made it really enjoyable. I wish we could have met so I could have told you how much I loved your book.

Sincerely,

Milo