

Reader Reviews

Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls **The Civil War Letters of Richard and Mary Watkins**

“Mr. Toalson has produced another wonderful collection of letters from the War Between the States. Richard and Mary Watkins take you on a personal four year “tell all” journey. What a great trip through the history of the war! . . . My family was from southern Virginia and reading Richard and Mary’s language and phrasing transported me back in time and had me sitting at the kitchen table listening to my grandparents. I am doing “right well” and you need to “make haste” and read this book.”

Lt. Cmdr. Don Woolridge
SCV Camp 2095
James City Cty., Virginia

“I savored this book . . . and was sad to have it come to an end. I quickly became very fond of Richard, Mary and their family . . . It was inspiring to realize the depth of Mary’s strength . . . and she did it with great courage and a tremendous lack of self pity. Richard, even in the worst of times, always had positive comments. They both are truly remarkable people. . . . huge lessons can be learned from them by us today in dealing with difficult challenges without giving in to bitterness and total despair. . . . Thank you for making it possible for us to step back in time and learn how to live . . . with dignity and determination.”

Donna Wixson
Williamsburg, Virginia

“Almost any time personal papers are rescued from the obscurity of the archives and made available to the public, there is cause for celebration. This is particularly true of the recently published *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls*, edited by Jeff Toalson. Based on the letters of Richard and Mary Watkins . . . these letters recount a true love story and, at the same time, reveal rich details of everyday life in war-torn Virginia. . . . *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls* deserves a wide audience . . . it will appeal to the male Civil War readership (campaigning with the 3rd Virginia Cavalry) but it deserves the attention of those who are more interested in the details of home and family life in Virginia during America’s greatest conflict.”

Russ Smith – BOOK REVIEW
The Free Lance Star – May 9, 2009
Fredericksburg, Virginia

“. . . Richard and Mary’s letters contain such a wealth of information . . . You become intimately involved in their “conversations” . . . Mary’s letters resonate with her grit and spirit . . . truly a great love story.”

Lorraine Beasley
Croaker, Virginia

“Jeff Toalson weaves a Civil War love story that stands the test of time. The worry and heartache of separation and issues of home that Richard and Mary faced are the same challenges faced by military families today. As readers, we are blessed that both were excellent writers . . . I truly savored their letters and fell in love with the whole family . . . it is so personal . . . at the very heart of it this is very much a love story . . . *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls* is a treasure.”

J. R. Snider – Radio Host
Triad Live & Local – WSJS
Winston-Salem, N. Carolina

“Richard and Mary’s letters are touching and intriguing, weaving both a love story and an intense personal eyewitness account of the war. This . . . rare collection of more than 300 unpublished letters . . . brings a clear sense of humanity to the conflict and its affects on those who lived through the time.”

iUniverse
Bloomington, Indiana

“*Boots & Kisses*, like a fine cup of tea, is steeped with romance, adventure & drama . . . all the ingredients of a novel. Knowing it is true, and all first hand, just adds to the excitement. Captain Watkins, writing frequently . . . oftentimes repeats himself in his correspondence . . . which just adds authenticity. This is one of the finest collections of letters that I have ever read. Mr. Toalson’s arrangement and editing of the letters along with his selective editorial comments and explanations are what makes this book such a good read.”

Roy A. Fleming
Winston-Salem, N. Carolina

“I normally read murder mysteries . . . stories that grab my attention and require me to turn the page to find out what happens next. *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls* fulfilled that requirement . . . I looked forward to the next letter from either Richard about Company K and the war or Mary about life at home and their hardships.”

Clet Gatzke
Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

“. . . a magnificent effort! . . . one becomes deeply involved in the day-to-day life of the family. This is the first book I’ve read that covers the everyday life of people caught up in the events of the Civil War from beginning to end. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and want to congratulate you on the great job of editing, assembling and annotating the Watkins correspondence, supporting letters and documents.”

Mac Parker
Williamsburg, Virginia

“. . . I am pleased that these letters have gotten the attention they deserve . . . It warms an archivist’s heart to know that the collection that he or she has worked hard to acquire and preserve . . . have produced such a useful and carefully documented transcription.”

E. Lee Shepard
Director of Manuscripts & Archives
Virginia Historical Society
Richmond, Virginia

“*Boots & Kisses* is, without a doubt, the best transcription of Confederate war letters that I have ever had the pleasure of reading.”

Troy D. Marshall
New Market, Virginia

“It is awesome to read the actual letters that were written back and forth between this husband and wife during the war. It gives you insight into the thoughts and trials of both the soldier and the farm wife. You feel as if you are right there with them. I was very impressed with *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls*. I highly recommend this book.

Faye Rutledge
www.squidoo.com/appomattox-court-house

“As the editor of this collection of letters, Jeff Toalson has done a wonderful job in prefacing each chapter so the reader has an overview as to the key events at that time. But the real gem in this book is the love that is so clearly demonstrated between Richard and Mary. I was amazed when I read Richard questioning whether it is right that he should love his wife more than his country; this was not sentimental exaggeration but truly a dilemma for him. . . . And when Mary describes the daily challenges of raising their young children or making sure the “negroes” have sufficient clothing/blankets, one sees Mary as a strong woman of her time. . . . Many people may simplify history into North versus South, slavery versus abolition, but this collection of letters shows that events are empty without the men and women who lived, suffered and tried to make sense of the times.”

David Kuroski
Powhatan, Virginia