



When we first came to the reservations we didn't know what to expect. None of us had ever been to a reservation before.

We guessed that we wouldn't be welcome. Being non-Indian, journalists and fairly uneducated on the current situation of the Indian community, we knew people might be hesitant to talk to us.

What we encountered was one of the most educational and enlightening experiences of our lives. We also discovered that the struggle of the American Indian is far from over and in many ways, it is beginning all over again.

After the first day we knew that we could never fully and accurately describe the situation of Nebraska Indians. We hadn't grown up on the reservations. We didn't know what the Indian people knew. And despite many personal interviews and much reading, the so-called "inside story" of how the people had survived against the odds remained a mystery to us.

What we have put in *The Sower* is what we encountered from the outside with the help of people

on the inside.

It is important to remember that these articles were written from the outside and provide only a "taste" of many years of struggle, hope and work. We are not Indians and we do not claim that we know the whole story. The Indian people did not come to us looking to tell their story. They did not "owe" us these interviews. Given the often one-sided views of the non-Indian community in the past, we understood when some were reluctant or refused to be interviewed.

What was surprising was the number of people who did let us in, if only for short time, at the risk of being misunderstood again. Most of the people in the Indian community were receptive, friendly and helpful.

To those people we owe great thanks — for their time, their congeniality and their cooperation.

Special thanks go to Frank LaMere, Richard Kitto and Steve Provost of the Nebraska Indian Commission as well as Barry Blackhawk of the Winnebago reservation.

We also learned from communication that went unspoken. For that reason, we'd like to thank the people who didn't want to be interviewed.

Due to lack of time and conflicting schedules we were unable to interview many people from the Omaha reservation, for that we apologize. Time and space restraints also prevented us from covering all the issues surrounding the Indian community at the present time.

There are reasons the Indian community is struggling. There are no easy answers. One thing that we learned, however, is that without a unified people, without help and without understanding, all the great history of the Indian people, their culture and tradition will be lost forever.

And that is a loss to everyone.

— Lee Rood, *The Sower* editor.

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