

We are working on gathering resumes for our group so that you can have a clear idea of the caliber of people involved in this plan. All are mixed bloods with very high degrees of skill in many areas. We plan to build the center with our own people rather than using outside contractors. It would meet and exceed building codes and regulations. One of our goals is to be nearly self-sufficient as far as the finances go. We believe that in addition to the amount allocated as profit to the tribe, we should be able to make enough money eventually to provide salaries for our year round core group, salaries for the day help, money to provide purchase of medical and dental insurance, plus, the garden would provide all our vegetable and herb needs and the livestock (primarily cattle, sheep, hogs, fowl) would provide the rest of the groceries. It would be possible to provide the noon meal for the day help and perhaps have enough left over to sell. If the land we are able to build on has a river or creek, we could even have a mill for grinding our own grain.

There are many details to work out, of course, but as you can see, we have already done a great deal of work on this plan. As Redbird Smith himself said in one of his last speeches, we must not forget the mixed bloods. It is our belief in have this teaching center, we can work with those who travel to us as well as those who write inquiries to the tribe (which I have been corresponding with and teaching for several years.) Without such a center, our people sort of give the message that after the removal, the people were in essence, forgotten. And except for the drama which is mostly the historical view of what happened, we seem to be sending the message that the period between the removal and 1994 is of no importance. There are hundreds of thousands of people out in our world who have an interest in their heritage and we feel strongly that our teaching center would address their individual needs and draw the whole tribe closer together. Mixed bloods have no control as to who their ancestors married and we, as a tribe need to let them know that they are necessary to our continued existence. We believe this teaching center would make our tribe stronger and healthier and more effective as Native Americans.

I have recently learned that a group in the Great Lakes region is building a center for people of those tribes in that area. It would seem therefore, not to be a pipe dream but something of great importance and necessity, for our own people to do likewise.

Another note of interest, our general store would sell the items we make in the center as well as other timely items. In no way would our general store be in competition with your already established gift shops because the merchandise would be entirely different. Individual craftspersons would demonstrate, give talks on their subject, but their finished projects would go to the general store for sale to the public. In this way only one set of books is necessary and one place to keep the cash.