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3401 E. Fairmount
Tucson, Arizona
85716

Dear Grace Halsell-

Thank you for your two books which you sent Jerry and me.

My husband probably did not tell you that I am a full-blood Indian - half Hopi, half Tewa. So your book on Bessie Yellowhair was of particular interest to me.

Your experience seems fairly common to reservation Indians. We've all been filled with an image of "slow, stupid, lazy" by the time we hit our teens. Your book awakened my own memories as a college student in Denver when I worked in a house just like the one you described, with the people you described. My term lasted about a month before it was over.

It's a terrible feeling, isn't it? To feel so manipulated?

Then I read Soul Sister. When I was 18 in 1956 I joined the U.S. Army and went to Anniston, Alabama. I learned then what outright segregation was. That my body was vulnerable to any white man, as you said. I think it's primarily in the West where the mental assaults

take place. In the South I was called "High Yellow." Probably that's why the white men thought I was their toy. But because I was not white skinned I was able to know black people. So your stories of warmth and helping were reminding me of the people I'd met there.

It's always been a remarkable thing to me to see white people with their children. Almost always it's been a saddening thing to see. In Tuba City, where we lived for a while, the Public Health Service doctors and their families were using the Hopi women for their servants and handymen and babysitters: "They're so much better than the Navajos, you know". 5 dollars a day - just like you said. The children were sometimes bright, almost always badly behaved, clean, and generally unlovable. Such unhappiness!

My husband has found that when he tries to tell his students about the viewpoints of minority groups, they just do not seem to register the fact that there're stereotypes of Whites too, both physical and personality stereotypes. The few Indian students do, of course, but the Anglos just sit there stunned.

He thinks your books might begin to make a dent in the shells, so he's made them required reading.

I want to say thank you, Miss Halsell, for writing your books. They both touched me in my heart.

If you come to Tucson, please stay with us. You are always welcome.

Anyway I'd like you to meet my husband. Out of the hundreds of people I've met in the ten years we've been married he's the one white man I know who's honest, truthful and kind.

Sincerely,

Maria Levy