



Red Dust and Broad sides: A Joint Autobiography

Gordon Friesen

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Perhaps best known for *Broadside*, the influential magazine they founded in 1962, Agnes "Sis" Cunningham and Gordon Friesen have long been renowned figures on the American left. In this book, these two dedicated social activists—Sis the folk musician and Gordon the radical journalist—offer a spirited account of their personal and political odyssey. The story is illustrated with numerous photographs and drawings. Born into poverty in rural Oklahoma, further shaped by the hardships of the "dustbowl" Depression years, Sis and Gordon were already committed to radical causes when they met and married in 1941. A short time later they moved to New York City, where they befriended Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. Sis joined the folk protest group the Almanac Singers, and Gordon continued his work as a journalist. Although blacklisted for their political views during the McCarthy era, Sis and Gordon persevered and eventually launched *Broadside*, which they continued to produce for almost twenty years. The magazine was instrumental in promoting the careers of many singer-songwriters, publishing the first works of such artists as Bob Dylan, Janis Ian, Phil Ochs, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and Tom Paxton, as well as the works of more established figures, including Malvina Reynolds and Pete Seeger. Indeed, *Broadside* gave birth to a musical revival that energized the country and forged a vital link between the folk music of the 1930s and 1940s and the urban folk revivalists of the 1960s and 1970s.

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