

August 30, 1928

Acting Secretary E. C. Finney acknowledged receipt of the letter and replied that careful consideration would be given to the various subjects covered by the letter and promised an early answer.

In general, the researched material will support the following conclusions:

1. The Oneida Tribe is the legal and beneficial owner of the two properties comprising what was formerly known as the Oneida Indian Boarding School tracts.
2. The Oneida Indian Boarding School was closed illegally and against the wishes of the Oneida people as documented by law, procedures, petition and resolution.

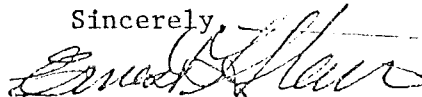
The Oneida Tribe, as the beneficial owner, was denied the legal right to approve any sale of the property; said sale was over the continuing and violent objections of the Oneida people as reflected by their duly authorized representatives.

3. The United States did not have any more than a quitclaim title. If they extended a warranty deed to the Murphy Land and Investment Company, it was fraudulently executed by the Interior Department. My impression is that the Oneida Tribe can easily maintain claim to ownership; can easily establish that only a quitclaim was legally permissible; and if the Catholic Church cannot defend its title against the Oneida Tribe, it must go to the United States for redress. In any case, the property belongs to the Tribe!
4. Multiple procedural errors were committed by the Interior Department in the transactions which were required by law. For instance, in the actual final transaction, there was no advertisement and only one offer which was accepted in spite of the fact that the Oneida Committee was prepared to bid, if necessary.

The entire episode is fertile ground for legal counsel and consideration. The above are only part of my impressions and are only threshold in nature.

It is said that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing". This is what I am passing on to the membership of the Tribe. A cursory review of the facts will provide the governing body with dangerous legal knowledge which bears with it, an obligation to recover our lands, fraudulently obtained without regard to any other consideration.

Sincerely,



Ernest L. Stevens