



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

BIA Central
Files, 1940-1952
acc # 53A-367
Box 1058
file # 00-1951-260

N.Y.

MAR 2, 1951

RG 75,
NA

Mrs. Mary Winder
Box # 278
Prattsburg, New York

Dear Mrs. Winder:

In response to your letter of February 5, 1951, inquiry discloses that the contract between the Onseida Indians of New York, and the law firm of Aaron, Aaron, Schimberg, and Hess of Chicago, Illinois, was approved by the Commissioner on November 9, 1950. I am unable to say whether the law firm has filed any claim on behalf of the Onseida Indians with the Indians Claims Commission as yet, and I do not know whether any Indian witnesses will be called in any hearings on such claims when they may be held. Since the law firm agreed to stand the cost of prosecuting the claim, I would assume that the expense of any necessary witnesses would be paid by the law firm. In any event, I suggest that you direct your inquiries about this claim to the law firm who, of course, are in a much better position to answer them than this Bureau.

With respect to the question about Onseida Indians from Canada being enrolled with the Onseida Indians of New York, I can only repeat my doubt that these people are entitled to be enrolled with the Onseida Indians in New York. It is my belief that if the Onseida Indians are successful in recovering a judgment in the Indians Claims Commission, the Congress, in appropriating funds in satisfaction of that judgment, undoubtedly will direct the preparation of a roll of Onseida Indians eligible to share in the benefits of the judgment.

I suggest that you report the election of officers by the Onseida tribe to this Office.

Sincerely yours,

((Sgd)) William B. Bengo

William B. Bengo
Chief Special Officer

[Handwritten signature]

Return without
enclosures

[Handwritten initials]

Carbon for Indian Office

WBBengo:MW
2/26/51

Hallsburg N.Y.

Feb. 5. 1951.

Dear Mrs Benge.

Since I haven't heard from any of our lawyers concerning the Queida claim, I was notified by my sister that our contract with the Chicago law firm was approved by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington. There are a few questions I would like to ask you, since I know you better, and I am quite sure you will advise me. I would like to know if any witnesses will be called at the hearing, who would be called if any, will we have a chance to make request of what we would like done with our money

of any, I would like to know
just what one would expect
if one was called at the hearing.
How about the expenses?

as you know we have
quite a number of Oneida
Indians who had lived in
Oneida Canada, at one time
and is now living in N.Y. State
but are not registered on our
government rolls, as much as
they have tried one time or
another, just what should
we do about these people
for we know they have a
part in this contract, we
held a meeting a few nights
ago and this question was
brought up so I told them
I would look into it and an-
-other meeting will be called

on March 7, 1951. at Onondaga
when I am to have a report
of this letter, at this meeting
we expect quite a few Onondas
to be present, I have papers
that prove that these Onondas
Indians have never given up
their title in N. Y. state or
the claim we have against
the state of New York, you
see it was their fore fathers
who reserved these lands in
case they should ever want
to sell the land they bought
with U. S. money when they
were forced off their lands
in Onondaga N. Y. My grandmother
was a girl at the age of 11 at
that time, she remembered
things that happened to these
people she used to tell me

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... or worse the white men
were to our people, therefore
these old folks, gave advice,
"never let the State of New York
leaders put jurisdiction over
the six Nations", they always
advised, and gave very good
reasons, one example of the
Oneida Nation, they are scattered
along the U.S. not because
they wanted to be that way
but because of white man's
fire water and a little money &
sweet promises.

The Oneida Nation of New York
did not have election of officers
in 1950 because of our contract
we thought it would hinder
the work, and we are going
to have this meeting Mar. 7-51
at our meeting on Jan. 24. 1951

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we nominated a few but
as yet not sworn in, that will
be done on March 7, 1957. should
we send the report of this
meeting + to whom? I seen
Miss Wayne at the State Fair
last fall and I asked her
who I should write too in
case I needed advice, and she
thought I should write to you
and you would know the proper
person to give advice. There
is also a big question concern-
ing the six Nations claim, it seems
that because there are more
then 2 sets of chiefs on each
Reservation that we can not
come to any agreement - I
am in the opinion that if
the people themselves on each
Reservation raised up a leader

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represent the tribe & they
can't they pick good lawyers
and sign contracts under
the Indian Claims Commission
I am afraid our chance
will go out with 1951 if some
thing can not be done, as you
know these so called chiefs
will never come to any decision
who is chief and who is not.

I hope I will not take up
your time, ~~as~~ this last question
is my own question. I will
be looking forward to your
reply and good advice.

Sincerely
Mrs Mary Winder
Orattsburg N Y
Box 275