

Gordon

January 30, 1987
Jack Campisi

Results of Interviews with Selected Members of
the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, [REDACTED]

The following is a summary of findings from interviews conducted with Oneida tribal members in November, 1986. A total of eighteen individuals were interviewed. The interviews lasted from thirty minutes to ninety minutes. The individuals were guaranteed anonymity.

Methodology:

During each of the interviews I asked a series of questions about the individual's expectations concerning the negotiations for the settlement of the land claims. Although the form of the questions varied slightly, there were four basic inquiries made:

1. What economic concerns do you have that should be addressed in the negotiations?
2. What non-economic concerns do you have that should be addressed in the negotiations?
3. How should any final award be divided among the three Oneida tribes?
4. What should be the position of the Oneidas of Wisconsin regarding land in New York?

I followed up each of the above inquiries with more specific ones. For example, if the response to No. 1 was money, I asked: How should that money be used? For what purpose? Some individuals asked how much money would be in the final settlement, but I gave no answer, suggesting instead, that they think in terms

of percentages to be applied to different needs, or priorities among the needs stated. I asked individuals to rank the needs and describe how flexible they were with respect to specific issues they raised. I kept the questioning as neutral as possible.

The results of this preliminary research are summarized below:

Findings -

I. General Consensus

A. Money should be to carry out the following objectives:

1. Expand the land base.
 - a. Over a twenty year period the most frequent estimate of the land needed was 20,000 acres, with a low of 5,000 acres and a high of 40,000 acres.
 - b. Land should be acquired that has multiple uses, some for agriculture, housing, stores/businesses, forest, and recreation.
 - c. Land is needed to meet the current demand and to bring back people to the reservation.
 - d. Land is seen as a means of providing for the maintenance of Oneida tribal culture and society.
 - e. Land is seen in the context of improving Oneida life style, the quality of life for tribal members.
2. There should be a per capita payment.
 - a. It was generally held that while this was not particularly advisable, it was probably necessary.

- b. It should be only a portion of the total cash received; the amount ranged from \$200 to \$5,000.
 - c. It should be handled in the same way as Docket #75.
 - d. There should be a fund set up for that specific purpose and that fund should be perpetual.
3. There should be money allocated for education and housing.
- a. An educational fund should be established to maintain the school and/or set up a secondary school.
 - (1) The school should stress a high quality of education so that Oneidas can compete with non-tribal members in college and work.
 - (2) Funds should be available so that Oneidas could continue their education after high school.
 - b. Housing was given a high priority.
 - (1) Tribe should purchase the HUD housing so that rents could be stabilized.
 - (2) Housing should be decentralized, with more land (3-4 acres) provided each house site.
 - (3) More low-income housing is needed for young individuals and couples.
4. Funds should be provided for cultural activities.
- a. The library and museum should be expanded.

- b. Opportunities for dance, theatre and the like should be provided.
- 5. Economic development is needed so that Oneidas will be able to find jobs and have opportunities to spend money on the reservation.
 - a. There was an emphasis placed on entrepreneurship.
 - b. Funds should be available to help individuals operate small businesses.
 - c. There was general support for tribal capitalism.

II. Points when there was either a lack of consensus, or no consensus was shown:

A. New York land.

- 1. There were some who view the maintenance of a land presence in New York as critical while others did not see that as meaningful _____ or symbolic.
- 2. Some were willing to have a part of the tribe's share of the award applied to the purchase of land in New York; others did not think this was acceptable.
- 3. There as no consensus on governance of land in New York. Some felt it should be governed by a tripartite tribal council; some were willing to accept governance by the New York Oneidas with guaranteed rights of occupancy by Oneidas from Wisconsin; others saw no need for any arrangement.

4. A few thought the issue was of such import that it could not be compromised; others saw it as an Oneida issue that should be negotiated among the Oneidas. The majority saw it as a negotiable issue that should not stall the negotiations.
- B. There was no consensus on how the settlement should be divided among the three Oneida tribes, although most thought a straight 1/3 division would be unfair and favored a per capita. Some realized that a per capita would be objected to by the other tribes. There appeared to be room for negotiations on the issue.
- C. Non-economic issues.
 1. Few thought of non-economic, symbolic, or governance issues.
 2. A few indicated that Oneida treaty rights should be guaranteed.
 3. A few spoke of retrocession.

III. Summary

The one conclusion that stands out from this preliminary work is that there is a perception that the tribe needs to carry out careful, long-range planning. The amount of land to be acquired is less important than its use. The money from the settlement should be put to improving the quality of life of the tribal members. This means providing adequate housing, social services,

education, and recreation to all Oneidas who wish to return to the reservation.

There was a consensus that the tribe needs to protect the award from short-term uses, and needs to secure it as a legacy for future generations. There was support expressed for tribal enterprise development as long as the profits are available to meet social and economic needs.

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2. There should be a per capita payment.

- a. It was generally held that while this was not particularly advisable, it was probably necessary.

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II. Points when there was either a lack of consensus, or no consensus was shown:

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- 1. There were some who view the maintenance of a land presence in New York as critical while others did not see that as meaningful _____ or symbolic.
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- 3. There as no consensus on governance of land in New York. Some felt it should be governed by a tripartite tribal council; some were willing to accept governance by the New York Oneidas with guaranteed rights of occupancy by Oneidas from Wisconsin; others saw no need for any arrangement.

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