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Tsi? Niyawáú tsi? Yotnuhsísu ne?n Parish Hall.

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How Parish Hall Was Built

It was in 1898 when I attended a school in Philadelphia and the priest here was named Merrill. He called two of us Oneidas and we went to New York City. The reason we went there was to ask how we would get a building here to use as a meeting place. When we arrived in New York the priest was waiting at the train station. When we met we got in an elevated train. We arrived on a Sunday and that was when we got out at a great school. A large number of young women lived there and they taught only rich women. Then we had a meeting. He used our nationality to ask for money so we might have our building here for meetings. He collected a lot of money for them to help us. At the end of it some young women came up to us and asked us to say 'I love you' in Oneida. We didn't because we were too bashful. That is when we left. Then the priest told us and said, "Why didn't you tell them?"

Then we got into town and we met another priest who was well off and he showed us a big hotel twelve floors high. We stayed there and he even paid. We were there for four days asking for money. So when we had enough, it was \$7,000.

So they started to build the hall. Then they finished that attached building, the bishop gave my late mother Margaret a shovel and said, "Dig here. This is where you will sew." The bishop said, "This is yours. This building is for you Oneidas to meet."

A long while later another priest arrived and he didn't pay any attention whatsoever about what happened. After a while he went home and then another arrived and he didn't even care at all what happened to our neglected building. He even let the white people come in and pass ahead of us. They spoiled our hall. You should have seen the wall. I was the one that sewed it up (and I was not paid anything) because I felt sorry about how it looked. I wanted to have my 25th wedding anniversary celebration about seven years ago. The priest told me it had to be by the white man's rules and I should pay \$8 and buy a permit for whatever doings I will have. I resented that because it is our building and yet we pay when we use it. And it was my face that made this building possible. Whose fault is it? Is it our fault? Or is it the fault of the one at the head? We should just thank God that he sent us the one we want.