



Tshikatayá·thahkwe.

[s.l.]: [s.n.], 1970/1979

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When I was in School

When I started going to school I must have been nearly ten years old and I arrived at a place called the Lutheran Mission. I didn't speak a word of English and there was no way I could learn the language because my parents only spoke Oneida. I had a very hard time.

I'll never forget one time when two girls were having a fight and one of them beat the other and scratched her face and hands until she was all bloody and she yelled out. Then the other one ran off and the matron came and I was the only one standing there comforting the one who had been picked on. She asked me if I had done this but I couldn't defend myself and the other girl didn't speak English either. So I was punished. They cut my nails and I sure got a licking. Right after that they went looking for someone to translate for us. I said I would arrange for my mother to come after me. She comforted me because the matron made a mistake.

So then I was picked on because I did not know the language. I went to school for three years elsewhere and then I went far out east where they taught me and I attended school for the last time for five years. During that time I was taught to speak English and I almost forgot Oneida. Since I have learned English I have always understood Oneida and even to speak but I have a hard time with my language. Thanks to you white people, you will teach us again to speak and write the language correctly.