

New Year's Eve story

by Olive Elm

After talking to a couple of elders and they also remember the same things I do about the service they used to have on New years eve about 60 years ago I decided I would share this story.

The year was 1952 my cousin from St Thomas came down to spend New years with us. We decided to go the to the New years Eve service at the First Baptist church, which was where the House of Prayer is now. My mother told us that we had better go early if we wanted to get a seat. The service started at midnight, so we left about 10 since we were walking. We got there about an hour later and sure enough it was already half full.

At that time all the community came together to enjoy the sermon and singing which was all in Oneida language. The Paster was Tsitwa:lu (Albert Nicholas). One of the nice things that I remember was that it didn't matter if you went to the longhouse or church, you were there to bring in the New Year together.

The service would end when the sun was coming up around five thirty. The last song that was sung was the New Years song.

I just remember the chorus.

Ukwahló:li tetwatatehaha (I will tell you brothers and sisters)

Né: tsi' niyukwatunhahele' (that we are rejoicing)

A:se yohslate (New Years)

Tetwatatn̄helátu (we will greet one another)

Then everyone would form a line and then start shaking hands starting from the front of the line. Sometimes there would be so many people that the line would almost reach the road. People would walk home and they would be Hoyaning. What a wonderful tradition.

