

# Oneida familiar Niagara name

For one hundred years. Oneida has been a familiar name in this community.

The Oneida Community was originally established in 1848 by John Humphrey Noyes on the Oneida Reserve in New York State, when this land was made available for settlement after the Oneida Indian tribe was relocated to Wisconsin.

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Together with 300 others of like religious belief, the Oneida community, under the leadership of Mr. Noyes, shared everything in common and established several business enterprises.

One of the most successful of these ventures was silverware manufacture. In 1879, the Oneida Community was dissolved and, in its place, as of

January 1, 1881, was a new community formed as a joint stock company, known as Oneida Community Ltd.

Several members of this new Oneida community moved to Niagara Falls, N.Y. where they established a silverware factory. Mr. Noyes purchased six acres of land on a bluff on the Canadian side, overlooking the Falls, in 1882.

The property Mr. Noyes pur-

chased was part of the 300 acre land grant given to Phillip George Bender in 1782 by the Crown as payment for services rendered during the American Revolutionary War.

Phillip Bender, a member of Butler's Rangers, was one of the first two settlers in what is now the city of Niagara Falls.

On this property purchased by Mr. Noyes, was a massive stone cottage of Gothic design, with a steep roof, sharp gables, leaded window panes and a verandah on three sides. It has a large stone barn connected to it by means of a long stone shed, and in this building complex, Noyes, and some of his followers, established the first Oneida Community in Canada.

~~In 1885, John Noyes died. Five years later, his wife died, leaving their son Pierrepont B. Noyes in charge of the community.~~

A big three storey frame building known as the Kelley House was erected adjacent to the stone cottage in 1885. This building was to serve as a school or "academy" for the Oneida Community children.

In 1896, the Oneida Community built a large three storey frame factory on Ellen Avenue to make animal traps. In one

end of this factory they also manufactured chains, but this division was sold in 1912 to the Dominion Chain Company. The animal trap business was retained until 1925 when it was sold to the Animal Trap Co. of America. The Woodstream Corporation now operates this enterprise.

The original Oneida silverware company was located in Niagara Falls, N.Y. from 1879 to 1914 when it was relocated to Sherrill, N.Y.

In 1917, a silverware manufacturing plant was built on the back portion of the Oneida's Canadian property using as part of it, the old stone barn, to make silverware for the Canadian market. However, the expanding business soon outgrew the makeshift quarters, and these old buildings were torn down in 1925 to make way for a three storey structure of hand cut Credit Valley stone. This building served as both factory and offices for the Oneida.

The Oneida Tower, with its flashing neon sign was a familiar landmark in Niagara Falls for many years. Built in 1963, the tower was the second of the city's current three towers.

Then, in 1974 Oneida Canada Ltd. announced plans for the construction of a new \$2 million building located on 20 acres at the corner of Stanley and Chipawa Parkway.

The Falls Avenue property was sold to G. and A. Properties and the beautiful old cut stone Oneida factory and tower have been incorporated into the design and development of Maple Leaf Village.