

1861

Reports of the Indian Agents of the State of Maine

James A. Purinton
Indian Agent, State of Maine

Geroge W. Nutt
Indian Agent, State of Maine

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REPORTS

OF THE

INDIAN AGENTS

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1861.

AUGUSTA:

STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1861.

REPORT.

PENOBSCOT INDIAN AGENCY, }
Oldtown, December 14th, 1861. }

To the Governor and Council of the State of Maine :

The financial affairs of this department for the year ending December 14th, 1861, are as follows :

RECEIPTS.

By amount of Warrant, February 23d,	\$1,500 00
" " " March 21st,	1,100 00
" " " May 27th,	1,500 00
By amount received for Grass,	6 00
" of Warrant, October 19th,	1,200 00
	\$5,306 00

EXPENDITURES.

For paid John Neptune, as per Resolve, 1861,	\$25 00
" " Peal Sockias—delegate, as per Resolve, 1861,	75 00
" " plowing and harrowing,	765 59
" Seed distributed,	556 15
" Annual spring dividend,	442 60
" Support of poor and sick,	1,655 09
" Clothing, for the poor, aged, infirm and children,	189 62
" Medical services,	165 30
" Funeral expenses,	142 78
" Incidental,	333 76
" Annual fall dividends,	1,138 82
" Tools and supplies for public farm,	47 07
" Superintendent's services on public farm to December 14th, 1861, as per Resolve,	325 00
" Repairs on the Indian Chapel, on Oldtown Island,	43 83
" Repairs on buildings on the public farm,	282 55

For Superintending School Committee of Oldtown, and Supervisors of schools at Lincoln, for sup- port of schools, as per Resolve,	225 00
“ Agent’s salary, 1861,	450 00
“ Bounties on crops,	564 65
	\$7,428 01

For items and dates of the foregoing expenditures I refer to my account herewith submitted.

From the foregoing statement it will be seen that the excess of expenditure above the receipts is	\$2,122 01
Total amount of appropriations for the year is	5,650 00
The excess of expenditures above the appropriations,	1,772 01

The items of this excess are as follows :

On buildings on public farm,	\$182 55
Repairs on Indian Chapel,	43 83
Excess of annuities beyond appropriation,	81 62
Amount paid for seed above the appropriation,	156 15
Bounties paid as by law provided and not appropriated,	564 65
Excess of expenditures for the support of poor, sick, and incidental, including the Agent’s salary, beyond the appropriation of interest on fund,	73 21

In justification of my expenditures on the public farm buildings, I would state, that the estimate in my report of last year for repairs on those buildings, had reference exclusively to repairs on the barn, on which the whole appropriation was expended. The condition of the house and cellar at that time could not then be ascertained on account of the embankment of earth about it. When this was removed in the spring, I found the house set on cedar posts, which the frost by its action for a period of twenty-five years, had spread and thrown from their original position, and in consequence the house had nearly fallen into the cellar, and the cellar was pretty much filled up and useless. The main house had settled away from the L some inches, and the whole building was in a very leaky and ruinous condition, rendering it uncomfortable as a residence and almost unfit for use. Although I took unusual precautions to keep the vegetables in the cellar from freezing, the major part of the potatoes and other roots were badly frozen during the past winter. In order to save the house from further de-

struction, and make the cellar secure and safe for the vegetable crop then growing on the farm, I ventured to make such repairs as I considered absolutely necessary to effect this purpose, deeming it a matter of economy and necessity to make such repairs at that time, without waiting for further appropriations.

The buildings, including house and barn, are now in good repair, and I feel confident in better condition, both for the comfort of the occupant and security of vegetable crops and hay, than they were originally. I think I may safely say that the same amount of money could not be more judiciously expended by me in this department.

The expenditure on the Chapel, the items of which may be seen in the accompanying account, were indispensably necessary to the security of the building, particularly the belfry. My attention was called to this matter last winter for the first time, and of course it did not come into my estimates for the present year.

Expenses of this kind do not fall within any of our treaty obligations with this tribe, but the spirit of those treaties seem to demand them of the State. In the treaty of Massachusetts of 1819, adopted by Maine in 1820, present needed repairs on the Chapel were specially provided for, and if it was a wise policy then to protect the buildings from decay, it would seem to be no less so now.

The expenditure for seed above the appropriation, arises from the fact that the Indians are giving greater attention to agriculture. More land is tilled, and more seed is required than formally; in proportion to the land now under cultivation, the quantity of seed distributed this year is not, in my judgment, greater than in past years. The excess of this item over last year, is but \$21.33, and over the year 1859, \$23.04.

The item of charge for bounties paid is not an excess of expenditure, as no appropriation has yet been made to meet it. The general law provides for the allowance of this charge in the month of January next.

The last item of excess of expenditure, as will be seen, includes the Agent's salary, which by the law of 1859 is fixed at \$450, and which being deducted, leaves \$2,932 expended for the support of the poor and sick, and for incidentals. The explanation of this excess is to be found in the fact that there has been this year an unusual amount of sickness, and an unusual number of deaths amongst the tribe, causing corresponding additional expenses for

medicine, medical services, funeral and other charges—added to this is the fact that during the last winter an uncommon large number of the tribe resided on Oldtown Island and in the vicinity; a larger number by far than has resided there in any winter for above fifteen years. Many of the families had been scattered off for a long time, and on returning in the winter season they came destitute and in need of immediate relief. The unusual number of poor families, and the unusual depth of snow and severity of the winter—the large amount of sickness and deaths—will fully account for the overdrawing above stated.

I may add here, reluctant as I was to exceed my limits, humanity would have compelled me to anticipate the appropriations still further, but for the generous aid some of the tribe in better circumstances rendered to their suffering brethren.

In this emergency the improved condition of those who have resided at home and cultivated the land, over those who wander from place to place, is marked and striking.

I will also further state by way of explanation, that the gross amount of my expenditures include the school money and expense of the delegate, which items amount to \$300, and which have not heretofore been included in the Agent's account; but this year for the first time these sums were ordered to be paid through my hands, which contribute to swell my account to the amount of those sums beyond what it really is as compared with the items in former accounts of this Agency.

POPULATION OF THE TRIBE.

From the census taken by the Superintending School Committee, required by the act of 1857, it appears that the whole number of the tribe in April last was five hundred and six.

SCHOOL STATISTICS AND PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

The Indian schools being under the care of the Superintending School Committees of the towns of Oldtown and Lincoln, whose report by the resolve of March, 1861, is made returnable to the Secretary of State, I have no official knowledge of the condition and progress of the schools. The school on Oldtown Island has been under the instruction of a female teacher seventeen weeks during the summer and fall. The attendance during the summer

term was 35, average attendance about 19—fall term, 37, average attendance, 26.

The branches taught are similar to those in the common schools, to wit: reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and geography. In the school at Lincoln the whole number of scholars was 18, average number 12—the school commenced in May and closed September 14th—whole number of weeks fourteen—the branches taught were similar to those in the schools on Oldtown Island. For a more detailed account of the schools, I refer to the reports of the several Superintending School Committees. Having had an opportunity to see the report of the Supervisor of Lincoln school, I am happy to be able to state here, that the benefit of the school is most felt and appreciated where it is most needed, in the younger portion of the tribe. In the language of the report, "those who manifest the least interest in the school are the oldest and those who know least the value of an education. The interest manifested by some of the parents is truly commendable and highly gratifying to witness."

From the best information I can obtain by observation and inquiry, there are now in the tribe more than one hundred who can read understandingly—for instance they obtain and read the newspapers which contain the current news of the day, in which they take a deep interest. About forty can write legibly, and some of them write and compose good letters, and can draw in respectable form, common business agreements. I am happy to say in this connection, that the present Superintending School Committee of Oldtown, with whose official duties, on account of proximity I am more particularly acquainted, have given all that attention to the Indian school that its importance demands. And as the present incumbents have had this school under their care for several years last past, it is but justice to say, that the gratifying progress exhibited in this school is in a good degree attributable to their assiduous exertions.

AGRICULTURE.

The Indian Public Farm is situated on Orson Island, which lies next above Oldtown Island. On this farm the crops the present season were as follows: about eighteen tons hay; two hundred bushels potatoes of good quality; about one hundred and fifty bushels oats. I sowed to oats about ten acres, which at first

promised well, and the prospect was that there would be a yield of three or four hundred bushels,—but when in the milk a small bug or fly made its appearance, and I was under the necessity of cutting the whole down in order to save any portion of the crops.

Owing to the lateness of the spring freshet, that portion of land which I intended for roots and vegetables, remained wet and under water too late to be prepared in season for the crop.

There is now on the farm about twenty-six acres under cultivation. Eight acres of this has been seeded down to grass this last spring—two acres have been cleared up this fall, ready to prepare for a crop. There are about fourteen acres of pasturage. The Indians are advancing in agriculture, both in the amount of land cultivated, and in the number employed. Their fondness for rambling is gradually yielding to the love of home and patient toil. There are now about one hundred engaged more or less in agricultural pursuits. About two-thirds of this number are located on Oldtown Island—the rest are scattered on the islands above for a distance of thirty-five miles. A large portion of their improved land is mowing ground; the proceeds of which contribute to their support. They cultivate patches of corn, wheat, barley, oats, buckwheat, beans, peas, potatoes, and the common vegetables. Their garden productions are generally of a good quality, and compare well with their neighbors, the whites. The arrangement of their grounds in many instances is orderly, and exhibits good taste. They are improving in the use of agricultural implements, and in planting and sowing.

I have already stated that the members of this tribe who attend to agriculture, are located mostly on Oldtown Island and in the vicinity. The whole number of islands in the Penobscot river belonging to this tribe, is 146, containing an area of 4,482 acres. Of this number 26 are within the limits of the town of Oldtown, and contain 1,949 acres—more than half of the remainder are in the vicinity of Oldtown, and within a circle of ten miles. Oldtown Island contains 298 acres. Orson Island contains 1,438 acres; the Public Farm, which is on this island, contains about 224 acres.

The Indians have under cultivation upon these islands an aggregate of about 1,000 acres, including mowing grounds. They do their own work, with the exception of such aid as the State gives them. It has been my endeavor since I came into the Agency, to foster a feeling of self-reliance among the tribe, in the manage-

ment of their agricultural business, and I am happy to be able to state that the favorable effect of this is already quite apparent. They are gradually becoming expert in holding the plow, sowing and planting, and in the use of the various agricultural implements. Some might be called good farmers.

GENERAL EMPLOYMENT.

There are about one hundred and fifty men of this tribe capable of labor—of these about one hundred are engaged in agriculture in the summer season, and at other seasons of the year more or less employed in hunting, in the logging swamp, and in driving lumber in the spring—of the rest, a portion are engaged in making canoes, baskets, moccasins and snow-shoes. In the moccasin and basket work, the women of the tribe generally participate.

These employments, together with the interest of their fund, bounties and annuities, a small stock of cattle, and some trifling rents, form their means of subsistence.

GENERAL CONDITION OF THE TRIBE.

Since my last report there has been an unusual amount of sickness in the tribe, and a large number of deaths—whole number exceeding twenty, mostly adults—some very aged. The prevailing disease was lingering sickness of a consumptive type.

There is some sickness now among them, but nothing beyond an average of cases. That portion of the tribe who have given their attention to agriculture and remained at home, are gradually acquiring the means of support, and give evidence of thrift in many instances—others who have heretofore led a roving life, are returning home and beginning to locate themselves permanently, and follow the example of their more industrious brothers. There is notwithstanding, a considerable portion of the tribe, consisting of the aged, infirm, widows and orphans, who must still remain dependent for their support upon the fund and annuities, and whose claims to assistance cannot be disregarded. In meeting these demands, often importunate, my endeavors to deal impartially and give satisfaction are sometimes unavailing. The distribution per capita among so large a number, leaves to each one an amount comparatively so small that their jealousy takes the alarm lest they should not receive their due proportion.

In a moral point of view, the condition of the tribe is satisfactory. They are peaceable among themselves with some few exceptions, and these exceptions are occasioned by intoxicating liquors, which they will sometimes obtain in spite of my watchfulness. In all cases of sale of liquor to them that have come to my knowledge, and when I could obtain evidence, I have prosecuted for the penalty, and in one case have caused the offender to be committed to jail, which in that particular case had the desired effect. In their intercourse with the whites there has been no collision that I am aware of.

In the view thus far taken of this tribe, I have exhibited or intended to exhibit them as a people slowly advancing in civilization. It cannot however be denied, that in another view they appear to less advantage.

It is said they are indolent, content in their ignorance, and indifferent to improvement. This it must be admitted is true to a certain extent, and in making their apology I shall not claim that their inferior condition is entirely attributable to accident or oppression. There are unmistakable indications that the people to which this tribe belong do not possess the high order of intellect that distinguish the European race. One of these indications is the poverty of their language, incapable of alphabetical form, and insufficient of itself unaided by symbols and hieroglyphics, to express their few and scattered ideas. It cannot seriously be contended that a language so unproductive could have belonged to a people of copiousness of thought. But if the inferiority of the race is stamped by this and other evidences that might be adduced, it by no means follows that this people are incapable of rising to the plane of common civilization.

It may well be asked, what avenues of improvement have been opened to a people constantly fleeing before a dominant race, hard pressed, retreating from place to place, till stripped of almost everything they possessed, they are cooped up at last on a few islands in a river whose banks from its source to its mouth, they could once call their own.

The Indian's backwardness in civilization is not owing entirely, scarcely at all, to his intellectual inferiority—he is just beginning to gain breath after his long flight from his pursuers. Whatever may be his capacity for reform, he has not had till recently any means at hand to employ it. It is not claimed he is destined to

the higher walk of civilization, philosophy, poetry, the exact sciences. The abstruse learning of the schools may be beyond his reach; but it is confidently asserted that he is capable of comprehending and following those employments wherein true civilization consists.

He is capable of being located in one spot, as a permanent home; of cultivating, improving and beautifying that home. He is capable of obeying the laws necessary to a well governed community. He is capable of the appreciation and exercise of the moral qualities, of the love of home, of friends and kindred, of truth, justice, industry, frugality, and of all the virtues which really constitute civilization and give it beauty. A knowledge and practice of these will make him a civilized being. And this, and all this, can be gained in the common school and on the farm. The experiment has not yet been tried, and it is but comparatively a few years that either of these agencies have been put in operation. Let them be tried, and thoroughly tried.

It is sometimes objected that the tribal institutions and customs of the Indians are incompatible with the institutions and employments of civilized life. This may or may not be—nor is it material whether it is one way or the other. If incompatible, the tribe will scatter, and the members will be incorporated into a common citizenship with us—if compatible, their tribal character will continue, and the benefits of civilization will be realized. In either case, such being the condition of the people, what as it regards them is the true

POLICY OF THE STATE.

It is believed that a common school education, a permanent homestead and agricultural pursuits, are the surest means in effecting the civilization of this people,—not that we would stop here, but the steady, unexciting business of the farm, is the best fitted to break up their rambling propensities, correct their impatience of labor, and form habits of industry.

No moral or religious training, no book learning, however valuable as helps, can complete the work of civilization among this people, so long as they remain in indolence, and rambling from place to place, picking up a scanty subsistence; only returning home, (if home it may be called,) to receive their share of the common fund, remain long enough to consume it, and then scatter

off. So long as they live in an unsettled condition, and their habits of wandering and idleness continue, little or no improvement will be made.

The true policy then would seem to be; to bring within their reach the simple rudiments of learning as taught in our common schools, which the humblest intellect can grasp; to cherish a love of home and of agricultural pursuits; to aid them in their labor as far as consistent—and to the reward that bounteous nature yields, add the bounty of the State. Such a policy it is believed, if it does not meet with entire success, will be an important step towards the social and moral elevation of this interesting people.

In concluding this report I would respectfully suggest that the following appropriations be made for the year ensuing:

Balance of the year, - - - - -	\$1,772 01
Interest on Indian Fund, - t - - - - -	3,000 00
Annuities, - - - - -	1,600 00
For Superintendent, - - - - -	325 00
Agricultural purposes, - - - - -	550 00
Bounties on crops, - - - - -	600 00
	\$7,847 01

JAMES A. PURINTON,
Indian Agent.

REPORT

By a resolve approved March, 1860, requiring the Agent of the Passamaquoddy Indians to report annually, I herewith submit my second annual report, as follows :

SYNOPSIS OF ACCOUNT.

By amount received for bounty for 1860,	-	-	-	-	\$375 00
“ “ of warrant in April,	-	-	-	-	1,100 00
“ “ “ August,	-	-	-	-	150 00
“ “ “ November,	-	-	-	-	500 00
					\$2,125 00

DISBURSEMENTS, AS FOLLOWS :

For paid bounty on agricultural products for 1860,	-	-	-	-	-	\$372 70
“ paid spring dividend,	-	-	-	-	-	470 20
“ seed and manure, as per resolve,	-	-	-	-	-	405 30
“ school-house at Peter Dennis' Point,	-	-	-	-	-	155 00
“ November dividend,	-	-	-	-	-	357 50
“ poor money,	-	-	-	-	-	359 00
“ one year's salary of Agent,	-	-	-	-	-	300 00
“ wood and fencing,	-	-	-	-	-	49 92
“ expense of Indians to election,	-	-	-	-	-	15 00
“ lumber for building purposes,	-	-	-	-	-	74 92

Showing the expenditures to exceed the receipts by four hundred thirty-four dollars and thirty-nine cents—to this must be added the bounty on crops for the year 1861, four hundred and twenty-five dollars, about four hundred of which I have already paid. An appropriation will be necessary to meet this amount.

CENSUS.

This tribe numbers by census taken in the spring of 1861, four hundred and sixty-three, showing an increase of seven since 1859.

The payment of dividends to this tribe have been per capita. Seed was distributed to those only who wished to plant; and poor money to those whose circumstances seemed to demand it.

EDUCATION.

By a resolve passed March, 1861, one hundred and fifty dollars were appropriated for the support of schools—a much smaller sum than was ever given before.

This amount was intended to be divided equally between the Pleasant Point and Peter Dennis Point Indians; but the School Committee of Princeton, receiving no notice of the amount appropriated, drew for and received one hundred dollars, leaving but fifty dollars for those residing at Pleasant Point. This school was taught by a member of the School Committee, James Stickney. I visited this school twice; it appeared very well, although but few scholars were present. I inclose the teacher's report of the average number in attendance each week, which also shows the length of term.

The school at Peter Dennis Point, I also visited several times. The attendance at this school was also small—this I judged to be for the want of a proper instructor. I think it a great mistake to employ inexperienced and incompetent teachers for these schools, and those too whose habits out of school do not come up even to the Indian's ideas of a model teacher.

From the progress the scholars have made in their studies in the limited term of their schools, and under the most unfavorable circumstances, it would seem that some means should be devised by which these schools could be lengthened. The great difficulty is that so long time passes between the terms of school, very much of the benefit they receive is lost upon the scholars.

There seems no way to remedy this but by a more liberal appropriation of money, and a more careful selection of teachers. I would therefore respectfully recommend that an appropriation of \$250, be made for this purpose.

Average attendance in weeks.

1st week, 37; 2d week, 42; 3d week, 25; 4th week, 31, 5th week, 22; 6th week, 36; 7th week, 15; 8th week, (next after vacation,) 21; 9th week, 49;—36 boys, 31 girls—total, 67.

This number attended school a part of the term in 1861, and I find 73 to be about the number of children between the ages of 4 and 21 years, in 1861.

Attest:

JAMES STICKNEY, *Teacher.*

AGRICULTURE.

This tribe is divided into nearly two equal parts, one-half residing at Perry, and the other up the river. They raise corn, oats, barley, buckwheat, potatoes, peas, beans, and the common vegetables.

I think it is a point that will be conceded by all those acquainted with this tribe, that great and rapid strides have been made by them in their interest in the cause of agriculture. The number engaged in farming this year was one hundred and twenty-one, an increase of thirty-one over 1860. When we consider the position these people hold when compared with their white neighbors; the many disadvantages under which they labor; the loose, idle and vagrant habits that have been instilled into them from their cradles; it is certainly an encouraging feature to see so many of them beginning to show so much readiness and desire to improve in farming. And in order to encourage this growing fondness in them, and to show them how much better off they would be if more of their time and energies were turned in this direction, how much easier and more comfortable their lives would be made; it would seem to be the decided duty of the State to make the most liberal appropriations in this direction

EMPLOYMENT.

Their principal employment in the winter season, consists of hunting by the men, and basket-making by the women—in summer, by farming and hunting. They spend a great portion of their time from June to October, in porpoise hunting, in which they are very successful, and earn a great deal of money.

CONDITION.

What I have said before in relation to their interest in farming, would extend to all their relations of life—that their general condition has improved in a very marked manner within the last few years, is a fact self-evident. I would cite as a proof, to their houses, dress, and habits. But a few years ago there were more than a hundred wigwams on Pleasant Point, and only two houses, where now there is not a single wigwam—all have houses, and the most of them very respectable looking ones.

Great improvement has been made also in regard to temperance. They passed a law to stop the sale and use of intoxicating liquors in their village, much more stringent, and I think better regarded, than is the Maine law by their white brethren.

Before closing my report, I would recommend an appropriation of two hundred dollars to finish the school-house at Peter Dennis Point, that it may be ready for the school next summer.

The Priest's house at that place is out of repair—it will require about one hundred dollars to keep it from further decay.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

GEO. W. NUTT, *Indian Agent.*