

1873

Report of the Agent of the Penobscot Tribe of Indians

George F. Dillingham
Indian Agent, State of Maine

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REPORT OF THE AGENT

OF THE

PENOBSCOT TRIBE OF INDIANS,

FOR THE YEAR

1873.

AUGUSTA:

SPRAGUE, OWEN & NASH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1873.

REPORT.

To the Hon. Governor and Council of Maine :

Agreeably to the requirements of law, the following report of the Agent for the Penobscot Tribe of Indians for the year ending December 1st, 1873, is respectfully submitted. The receipts and expenditures under the various appropriations of the last Legislature, as will more fully appear by the accompanying account and vouchers, have been as follows :

EXPENDITURES.		
For amount paid for agricultural purposes, per resolve.....	per resolve.....	\$937 53
“ “	bounty on crops, per resolve.....	482 65
“ “	goods for annuity, per resolve.....	1,778 44
“ “	salaries Superintendents farming, per resolve...	150 00
“ “	salary of agent, per resolve.....	300 00
Amount interest on trust fund, expended as follows:		
“	paid for goods for spring dividends.....	\$727 02
“	support for poor, aged, infirm and sick....	2,303 70
“	medicine and medical attendance.....	350 94
“	funeral expenses.....	118 97
“	wood for tribe.....	836 70
“	incidental expenses.....	200 88
		4,537 21
		\$8,185 83
RECEIPTS.		
1873.	By warrant.....	1,500 00
March	“	1,700 00
Ar	“	1,500 00
Oct.	“	2,300 00
Dec.	“	1,147 51
Amount corn, flour, pork and molasses remaining from spring dividends.....		38 32
		\$8,185 83

The appropriation for schools, salary of Governor, Lieutenant-Governor and Priest, were by the last Legislature authorized to be paid from the shore rents. The expenditures under said appropriations would seem to belong to that account, and will therefore be presented with the disbursements of that fund.

In 1872, a fence was built around the old burying ground of the tribe on Oldtown island, and then received only one coat of paint. A due regard for the respectable appearance of the grounds as

well as for the preservation of property and improvements made by the State, seemed to require that the fence should be repainted this year, which has been done, doubtless rendering unnecessary any further outlay on this ground for several years to come. The fence around the new cemetery would be very much improved by the addition of one or more coats of paint the coming season. The Indians manifest quite a desire to preserve a comely appearance of the last resting place of their departed brethren.

Previous to this year there had never been any regular convenient landing place at the foot of Oldtown island, or public way connecting the shore with the travelled ways in the central part of the village. The custom heretofore has been to land their canoes with their various loads at almost every part of the shore and to travel thence over numerous inconvenient foot-paths across private lots for several rods before meeting anything like a public way. The increased number of horses and teams owned by the tribe, presented a farther urgent reason for the establishment of some public way and landing place at a point of so much importance as this, and of so varied and public use. For these reasons and others which might be named, it seemed that a way must be regarded as a matter of public necessity as well as common convenience and that under the laws requiring the Agent to assign lots, &c., to the members of the tribe, it became my duty to establish and open such a way. Accordingly a good way has been constructed this season, commencing at the river at a point the most accessible to Oldtown village and the mills, thence passing northerly in front of the church nearly across the common, thus connecting with all the public ways which centre at this point. To effect this object it was found necessary to exchange private lots and move one building. The exchanges were effected amicably without expense to the State farther than the cost of moving the building. The street completed adds very much to the general appearance of the lower portion of the island.

Schools have been taught this year at the places designated under the appropriation act, under the charge of the committees therein named, whose reports will give all matters of importance and interest concerning these schools respectively. So far as I have been able to learn, the progress, attendance and interest manifested in schools has been as commendable as during past years.

AGENT'S REPORT.

The census of the tribe will be taken in January agreeably to resolve of the last Legislature which changed the time for meeting them for that purpose from May to January in order to have the list corrected before dividing the shoreage money in February. No important changes in the physical, social and sanitary condition of the tribe is to be reported. Their agricultural efforts have met with a fair degree of success, and while the general depression of business has shortened the term of, and lessened the wages for their usual labor in the different branches of lumbering operations, they have met with good success, generally, in the sale of baskets and other wares of their own manufacture.

The lease of a portion of the shores of Orson island expired last January. This lease was granted many years ago and has yielded for the use of these shores an income of twenty dollars per year. Under direction of the Governor and Council these same shores were on the 10th of March, 1873, at Oldtown, again leased in three separate parcels for a term of five years from and after January 1st, 1873, for an annual rental of five hundred and eighty-five dollars, payable to the Treasurer of the State of Maine on the first day of May of each year.

For several years past there has been great difficulty in procuring dry wood for the use of the tribe. The only land owned by the tribe in this vicinity from which wood could be obtained is Orson island which was formerly well wooded and yielded sufficient fire wood to answer all the necessities of the tribe, but from constant cutting and frequent fires, this island has become so stripped of its growth, that no wood of any amount can be obtained from there; in addition to this scarcity is also the fact that a large portion of the saw mills at Oldtown and Milford have for the past two or three years remained idle, and consequently not yielded the usual supply of wood, and from present indications no relief can reasonably be expected from this source. For the sick, poor, aged and infirm, dry fire wood must be furnished to a greater or less extent by the State each year, and there appear to be two ways to obviate the present difficulties. First, to grant authority and funds to purchase green wood each winter, to be properly stored and held over until suitably seasoned and then distributed as the necessities of the tribe may require, or, second, to purchase a wood-lot for the tribe. Without doubt the second course would be the most practical, satisfactory, and in the end,

the most economical, and attended with the least trouble to the State. There are wood-lots suitable for this purpose within a convenient distance of Oldtown island, covered with thrifty green growth, while the down trees and standing dead trees would furnish from year to year a large amount of dry wood ; and the labor required in preparing and hauling it would furnish employment to different members of the tribe. A sum diverted from their funds and used in the purchase of such a wood-lot would be a good investment for the tribe, without expense to the State, and doubtless satisfactory to a majority at least of the members of the tribe.

GEO. F. DILLINGHAM,

Agent Penobscot Indians.