

1874

Report of the Agent of the Penobscot Tribe of Indians

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Indian Agent, State of Maine

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REPORT OF THE AGENT

OF THE

PENOBSCOT TRIBE OF INDIANS,

FOR THE YEAR

1874.



AUGUSTA:

SPRAGUE, OWEN & NASH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1874.

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, 1874, is respectfully submitted. The receipts and expenditures under the various appropriations of the Legislature of 1874, as will more fully appear by the accompanying account and vouchers, have been as follows :

EXPENDITURES.		
	For amount paid for agricultural purposes, per resolve.....	\$896 03
	“ “ bounty on crops, per resolve.....	359 15
	“ “ goods for annuity, per resolve.....	1,826 25
	“ “ school-house on Olamon island, per resolve.....	200 00
	“ “ 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.....	\$792 77
	“ “ support poor, aged, infirm and sick.....	1,939 38
	“ “ medicine and medical attendance.....	290 00
	“ “ funeral expenses.....	168 88
	“ “ wood for tribe.....	1,218 71
	“ “ incidental expenses, painting church, &c.	278 56
		4,688,30
		\$8,419 73
RECEIPTS.		
1874.	By warrant.....	2,000 00
April	“	2,000 00
June	“	2,500 00
Oct.	“	1,879 70
Dec.	“ (to be drawn).....	1,879 70
	By amount corn, flour, pork and molasses remaining from spring dividends.....	40 03
		\$8,419 73

The fund arising from the leases of shores belonging to the tribe received by me from the State Treasurer, March 10th, 1874, amounted to \$5,756.85, and has been disbursed according to the provisions of the law, and the special appropriations of the Legislature of 1873, as follows :

For support of school on	Oldtown Island.....	\$200 00
“ “ “	Mattanawcook Island.....	120 00
“ “ “	Olamon Island.....	80 00

For Salary of Priest.....	\$100 00
“ “ Governor	50 00
“ “ Lieut. Governor	30 00
“ Paid to members of the tribe under Chap. 267, Laws of 1873, as per account herewith rendered, marked F.	4,631 00
“ Balance remaining to be added to said fund under said chapter	545 85
	5,756 85

This is the first year that the above named law has, or could have, a practical operation, and the result has proved it to be highly beneficial, and of great assistance to the tribe,—perhaps more especially so this year on account of the great depression in business enterprises, and the consequent small demand for labor in lumbering operations, which usually furnish a large part of the Indians employment. A majority of the tribe have as a matter of principle and inclination, made a good and profitable use of the money derived from this fund; others, as a matter of necessity, have so done, while a few, though not more than would have been the case in an average number of whites, have probably not applied their share to so judicious purposes.

The schools taught at the places above named, appear to have been in all respects conducted to the general satisfaction of the tribe interested in them respectively. The several School Committees under whose care they more particularly fall, will, I presume, report to you in detail in regard to the attendance, progress and other matters of importance pertaining to these schools.

With the appropriation of two hundred dollars for that purpose, I have erected and nearly completed a school house on Olamon Island, 16 x 24 feet, sufficiently large to accommodate all the scholars in that vicinity. A farther appropriation of fifty dollars will be necessary to plaster the school room and furnish warming apparatus for the same.

The ell part of the parsonage adjoining the church on Oldtown Island leaked badly, and on examination it was found necessary to re-shingle it, as well for the protection of the building as for the comfort of the occupants. It was further deemed advisable to put two coats of paint on the church, and I have accordingly made these repairs. The work appears to have been well done, and the general appearance of the building is very much improved.

The crops raised in their gardens and fields are rather below the average of former years. This may be attributed in part to their inability to commence farming operations till late in the Spring, and also in part to their method of cultivating the land. There is not kept among the tribe sufficient stock to furnish the dressing required by their lands, and all are not able to purchase commercial manures, so that by the constant cropping of years without replenishing by manures, and in many cases by persistent labor, the lands have become greatly impoverished, and in places run out and nearly worthless.

The physical, social, and sanitary condition of the tribe has presented no material change since the time of my last report. Their labor has not been in very great demand, consequently low prices and short terms for labor have prevailed. In the sale of baskets, toy canoes, and other articles of their home manufacture, they have met with better success, and the demand on them for fancy wares, and of original and peculiar designs, has called into active exercise their inventive faculties.

Shores whose leases expired during the year were again leased at public auction, March 20th, 1874, for a term of five years from January, 1874, as follows :

West side or shore of islands numbered on plan 14, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 32.	
All the shore of No. 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, and 34 to 49, both inclusive, to Penobscot Lumbering Association for one thousand dollars	\$1,000
East side or shore of Oldtown Island, Jos. Frances	50
West " " " " White, Averill & Co.	100
East side or shore No. 14, all shore No. 15, Daniel Lunt...	575
East side or shore No. 19, 20, 21, and all 24; East side or shore No. 28, from boom house to foot of said island, Lunt & Rolfe.....	86
East side or shore No. 27 and 29, Samuel Low.....	770
West " " " 27, W. Maxfield.....	380
East side or shore No. 28, from boom house to head of said island, I. F. Bussell.....	150
All shore of No. 33, Col. J. W. Porter.....	5
" " 54, Passadumkeag Boom Co.....	10
" " 57, to C. F. Jordan.....	10

Yielding thirty-one hundred thirty-six dollars, payable to the State Treasurer May 1st, annually. The west shore of Orono island was leased November 18, 1854, for a term of 20 years, at an annual rent of five dollars, and is the last of the old long leases.

The following leases expire January 1st, 1875: East side or shore, Orono Island; west side or shore of Orson Island, from the Cook, so called, around the foot of said island, to the first bridge of the Bangor and Piscataquis Railroad; from the bridge above named to the head of the Thoroughfare, so called, and from the head of the Thoroughfare to the south line of the public farm on said island.

The amount of the wood bill for the tribe has been large, as will be seen by the account rendered. As suggested in the report of last year, the Indians having no wood lot, and the saw mills in this vicinity not running to any great extent, causes a scarcity of fuel to them, and a large sum must necessarily be expended in procuring and furnishing suitable wood for the sick, poor, aged and infirm. The course adopted in that respect during the past year, seems to be judicious expenditure of the money, as not only relieving their wants in this particular, but also furnishing some employment and tending to keep members of the tribe at home during the winter, and in a measure breaking up the disposition of roving to other places and towns without any definite business, or prospect for any.

Under resolve of the last Legislature, a special election was held March 20th, 1874, when Sockbesin Swassian was elected Lieutenant-Governor, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Lieutenant-Governor Attian Orson, on January 12th, 1874. The regular election of the tribe was held November 4th, 1874, when Sabatis J. Mitchell was chosen Governor; John Neptune, Lieutenant-Governor; and Mitchell Paul Susup, delegate to Legislature.

The Indians are very fond of dancing, and one or the other of their political parties frequently occupy their respective halls for this purpose. Often these assemblies are largely attended by the whites, and sometimes their natural jubilant spirits are assisted by intoxicating spirits. Whether carried there by whites, or otherwise obtained, I have been unable to ascertain. Many of the tribe very much regret the occurrence of these disturbances, but are without the power of preventing them; and I have frequently thought that if some suitable persons from each party could be appointed police officers, or constables, much of this dis-

orderly conduct could be prevented. And if consistent, I would recommend the passage of a law authorizing the appointment or election of such officers, whose jurisdiction shall extend to the several islands occupied by this tribe.

An appropriation was made last winter of one "hundred dollars to be expended for the survey of their islands in the Penobscot, or as much of it as required to mark or re-mark surveys on said islands, and fix boundaries of private lots that are in dispute." The delegate at whose suggestion the above appropriation was granted, supposed it was provided in the resolve that a portion of the amount might be used for the purchase of old field notes, referred to by me in my report for A. D. 1868, as follows: "Lore Alford, a well-known land surveyor in this vicinity recently died, leaving in the possession of his heirs all his field notes and plans of the islands in the Penobscot river. He had made extensive surveys of the various lots on these islands, probably more than all other surveyors together, and these papers constitute the most reliable records of these lots, &c., and will hereafter be, if not now, of great value to the State. I have conversed with the executor of his estate in regard to these papers, and he offers to sell them for one hundred dollars. I make these statements in order, that, if you should consider the matter of sufficient importance, proceedings may be taken with a view to the purchase of these papers."

No disputes in regard to lines having arisen, and not being in possession of the field notes, or any papers, to form a basis or starting point for making surveys, and the members of the tribe not appearing at all anxious for the expenditure of any portion of their shoreage fund for such purposes, the appropriation has not been expended. The field notes referred to, I think can now be purchased for a less sum than before named, and as these constitute the only record of the lots, either public or private, I am fully convinced that the purchase of such field notes and plans will save in time to come much expense and litigation, and would recommend that the resolve be so amended as to authorize such purchase.

GEO. F. DILLINGHAM,

Agent Penobscot Indians.