

1890

Report of the Agents of the Penobscot Tribe of Indians

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Indian Agent, State of Maine

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REPORT OF AGENT

OF THE

PENOBSCOT TRIBE OF INDIANS,

FOR THE YEAR

1890.

AUGUSTA:

BURLEIGH & FLYNT, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1891.

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable Council of Maine.

I have the honor to submit my third annual report as agent of the Penobscot Tribe of Indians. The accounts and corresponding vouchers embrace a period from December 1, 1889 to December 1, 1890..

APPROPRIATIONS (RESOLVES OF 1889.)

Annual interest of Indian Trust Fund	\$4,429 70
For farming	700 00
· superintendent of farming	150 00
schools	600 00
salary of governor of tribe	50 00
“ lieutenant-governor of tribe	40 00
“ priest	100 00
“ Indian agent	200 00
bounty on crops	200 00
fall dividends (annuity)	1,700 00
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	\$8,169 70

RECEIPTS.

Cash balance from 1889	\$47 24
Unexpended appropriation of 1889 for repairs to Olamon school-house	50 00
Unexpended appropriation of 1889 for repairs to Old Town Indian Island church	90 00
From H. A. Jellison for stumpage on island No. 24	6 00

March warrant	\$2,200 00
June "	2,000 00
October "	3,040 00
October, B. B. Ayers, for stumpage on island No. 57	25 00
December warrant.....	929 70
	<hr/>
	\$8,387 94

EXPENDITURES.

For supplies to poor, sick and infirm	\$2,187 60
burial expenses.....	70 58
medicine and medical attendance.....	585 36
wood and wood hauling.....	1,207 50
spring dividends.....	440 46
contingent expenses.....	311 67
farming	690 49
superintendent of farming.....	150 00
schools.....	508 37
repairs to Olamon school-house	50 00
Old Town Indian Island church ..	90 00
fall dividends (annuity).....	1,407 00
bounty on crops.....	200 00
salary of governor of tribe, Saul Neptune...	50 00
" lieut.-governor of tribe, Sebattis Dana.....	40 00
" priest.....	100 00
" Indian agent.....	200 00
cash balance on hand.....	98 91
	<hr/>
	\$8,387 94

SHORE-RENTS.

The demurrer of the Penobscot Lumberman's Association to the price asked them as rental for the island shores, viz. : \$1,000 per annum, not being sustained by the governor and council of the State, a lease was duly made and signed, fixing the annual rental as above, for a term of five years from

January 1, 1889, being in conformity, as to time, with all of the other shore leases. The amount temporarily withheld by the association, viz. : \$200, will appear in the distribution of shore-rent fund of 1890, to be made in February, 1891, as per statute requirement. The following is the account of the shore-rent fund of 1889, distributed in 1890.

RECEIPTS.

April warrant.....	\$2,982 00
Balance from last year.....	24 38
	<hr/>
	\$3,006 38

CONTRA.

Paid to tribe per capita, as per accompanying receipts.....	\$2,880 00
Paid on municipal account, (as per resolves of 1889, appropriating to this use 5 per cent. of shore-rent money of that year) see accompanying vouchers.....	149 47
Balance to new year.....	48 91
	<hr/>
	\$3,006 38

CENSUS.

The last enumeration of the tribe, made in January, 1890, by the Superintending School Committee of Old Town, shows a membership of three hundred and seventy-seven, four less than in 1889.

ELECTION.

At the biennial election of officers for the tribe, held on Tuesday, October 7th, and at which the New Party, only, exercised the right of suffrage, the following choice was made: For Governor, Joseph Francis; Lieutenant-Governor, Francis P. Socklexis; Representative to the Legislature, Lola Coley. This is the second election of these members to the same respective positions, the first occurring in 1886.

SCHOOLS.

The school on Old Town Indian Island is still under the instruction of Sister Christiana of the resident Sisters of Mercy, who says of her charge: "There has been a constant increase in the interest manifested by the parents, in sending the children punctually and regularly to school. The whole number of pupils is forty-five, all of whom, with the exception of two or three boys, who worked during the fall, have attended regularly. The children are intelligent, retaining the knowledge imparted and progressing rapidly. One of the boys of the higher class entered the Hampton Institute, Virginia, in September. Book-keeping, for which the boys show an aptitude, has been taught during the year." The most serious obstacle to the fullest success of the school here, is that experienced in a less degree in our own High and Grammar schools, viz.: the difficulty of retaining scholars who have arrived at the age of fifteen or sixteen. In my judgment the money would be well expended, if a separate school were carried on for the older class of pupils; at least for one term in the winter, when, without doubt, it would be well attended. The instruction here is nominally under the care of the Superintending School Committee of Old Town; but from time immemorial their active participation in Indian affairs has been confined strictly to the taking of the census. The school-house on Olamon Island has been repaired during the year and two terms taught therein, one of six weeks and one of seven, and at the same time this Island has furnished a small quota of pupils to attend at Old Town. Mrs. M. V. Harris, Supervisor of Olamon schools has general oversight, and takes considerable interest in her charge. She writes: "The number of scholars having their home on Olamon Island for the present year is fifteen; number attending summer school, seven; number attending fall school, ten, with an average of six. Both teachers did very good work. A number of the scholars—boys—worked away, so did not attend school."

This year, as last, the scholars on Mattanawcook Island attended the public schools of Lincoln, and the Mattanawcook Academy in the same town; an arrangement that seems advantageous and satisfactory; though a few small scholars failed to go; and if it is found necessary next year to open a school on the Island for the few who cannot or will not attend at Lincoln, the surplus of school money of this year will then be needed. Mr. C. A. Brown, Supervisor of Lincoln, reports of the Indian scholars: "They are having everything done for them that can be done. They go to school every day that school keeps, don't miss a day and are doing very well indeed."

AGRICULTURE.

The Indian farmer, even more than the white, has felt the effects of the unfavorable weather of spring and fall of this year. Planting was much delayed in consequence of the wet and cold; and in some places, especially on Olamon and Mattanawcook Islands, farming operations were curtailed considerably by reason of the long continued overflow of their alluvial lands. The Indians, however, did the best they could under the circumstances; and, although somewhat later than usual, put into the ground quite a fair amount of seed. The many successive rains of the fall prevented a proper maturing and harvesting of the crop, and as a result, the potatoes that were planted on the low lands rotted to quite a serious extent, and the beans were more or less affected with rust. The other crops did fairly well; yet the net returns are considerably below that of the average year. Even under such adverse circumstances, the amount appropriated by the legislature of 1889, for the payment of bounty on crops, was barely sufficient for the purpose this year, and as stated in my last annual report, entirely inadequate for the preceding season of 1889, in which year the contingent fund of the State was called upon to make up the deficiency. As the law expressly provides (Revised Statutes, chapter 9, section

33), that a stated price be paid the Indians for every bushel of potatoes, beans, peas, oats, etc., raised by them; it would seem, therefore, but proper, that such an amount be appropriated, as would meet the probable requirements of the case. In my opinion, that amount is not likely to be less than three hundred dollars; and I would recommend that that sum be appropriated for this purpose for each of the years 1891 and 1892.

The following is a statement of the crops raised this year and upon which bounty was paid, viz :

Potatoes	2244 bushels.
Beans.....	154 “
Peas	28 “
Oats	510 “
Root-crop.....	212 “
Barley	45 “
Buckwheat	35 “

IN GENERAL.

I am glad to be able to note many signs of improvement in the general well-being of the tribe. Their social contact with the whites, is a ready reminder that progress can come only by labor and forethought, and the many attractive homes they see on all sides, stimulate them to make their own likewise comfortable. Several new houses have been built during the year upon Old Town Indian Island, and many more have received improvements in the way of paint, shingles, clapboards, etc. More attention is now given than formerly, to clothing warmly in winter, a needed guard against the cold weather to which they are all much exposed. While last year was noted for the excessive number of deaths in the tribe—twenty-seven in all,—this year is marked by an unusually small number,—viz., eight—four adults and four children. This disparity in health as indicated by the death rates, cannot, of course, be attributed to any sudden change in their habits of living, for their knowledge of the laws of

health comes but slowly, and their readiness to profit therefrom hardly moves with equal pace. This year, however, by a combination of causes not all apparent, proved to be singularly free from fatal diseases; though minor ailments, as usual, offered a good field for the skill of the doctors.

Perhaps the greatest enemy the Indians have to contend with, is their love for intoxicating drink; the fire-water of to-day, according to all evidence, being even more poisonous than that furnished with less freedom to their ancestors. I do not, by any means wish to imply, that there are no strictly temperate persons among the members of the tribe; on the contrary there are many such, I am happy to say; but it is a fact nevertheless, that many of the Indians drink to excess; and they are encouraged in this by the ease with which they can obtain the liquor in almost any one of the odd dozens of places in the neighboring towns, where it is freely sold. I have no radical measure to propose for the extermination of this evil, and I know it is difficult even to restrain and lessen it; for the value of the dime that buys a glass is one-tenth that of the "mighty dollar," which is the incentive and supporter of the traffic. But, as the whites only are responsible for the sale, it is their evident duty to furnish such aid in mitigating the evils resulting therefrom, as the wisdom of their own experience may dictate. I am supported by the prominent members of the tribe in the belief, that the good of the whole tribe requires the services of a special constable, to preserve peace and order among them whenever threatened; to take into custody those who have lost proper control of themselves, and to see that the present laws against the sale of liquor to the Indians be more fully complied with. It not unfrequently happens that some intoxicated Indian, taken home by his friends, or betaking himself there of his own accord, to escape arrest in the neighboring town, finds abundant opportunity to create disturbance and damage, there being no officer at hand to take him in charge. I think the efforts of such an officer, supplemented by the erection and use of a good lock-up

upon Old Town Indian Island, would act to an appreciable extent as a preventive of and remedy for a very great evil.

I would respectfully recommend, therefore, that a constable be appointed, and that the ensuing legislature make an appropriation to meet the necessary expenses. I would suggest as a proper amount for these purposes, two hundred and fifty dollars, one hundred and fifty for the building and one hundred for the officer. Such expenditures would, in my judgment, be amply justified by the benefits attained. It is by no means a fact, that this evil of drunkenness is of recent birth. It has thriven for many years, and now, as heretofore, offers a most serious obstacle to the growth and prosperity of the tribe; indeed, it is almost a wonder, that in spite of such a hindrance, the tribe succeeds so well.

At home the ready sale of their baskets serves to keep the members together, and it is only an exceptional case, where a family is found in the winter living away from the reservation.

I found it practicable last fall to make some long needed repairs to the roads and bridges on Old Town Indian Island; using for the purpose, the balance of the shore-rent fund appropriated for municipal needs, and certain contingent money saved from various sources. It is not now expected that a ferry-boat will longer be required on the Island itself, as has always been the case in time of spring freshets; the dwellers on Oak Hill, so-called, having been shut off at such times from the rest of the settlement, by a formidable body of water overflowing their old road and bridge. It is hoped that other streets may be graded and improved from time to time, as opportunity may offer.

The chancel of the Island church is now completed. It is 20x30 ft. in size, costing about seven hundred and fifty dollars, and makes a fine addition to the church proper. It was largely built from the accumulated savings of baskets made by the Indians during the past three years, and donated by them for this purpose, to the resident Sisters of Mercy, who have zealously had this matter in hand. As it

was found, upon more thorough inspection than at first given, that the church would not need resilling for many years to come, the ninety dollars designed for that use and for repairs, were, by my advice, the Governor and Council consenting, expended for general repairs and for the completion of the chancel. Much credit is due the Indians and the Sisters of Mercy for the industry and perseverance with which they have carried out their plans to enlarge and beautify their church.

Respectfully submitted,

J. N. STOWE, *Agent*.

OLD TOWN, Me., December, 1890.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN COUNCIL, January 6, 1891.

Accepted by the Council and five hundred copies ordered printed.

ORAMANDAL SMITH, *Secretary of State.*