

1891

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

1891.

AUGUSTA:

BURLEIGH & FLYNT, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1892.

REPORT.

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

In accordance with the provisions of the law, I herewith submit my annual report as agent of the Penobscot Tribe of Indians, and accompany it with vouchers for all moneys expended from December 1, 1890 to December 1, 1891.

APPROPRIATIONS (RESOLVES OF 1891.)

Annual interest of Indian Trust Fund.....	\$4,429 70
For furning.....	700 00
superintendent of farming	150 00
schools.....	600 00
repairs to Old Town Indian Island school-house	200 00
salary of governor of tribe	50 00
" lieutenant governor of tribe	40 00
" priest	100 00
" Indian agent.....	200 00
full dividends (annuity)	1,700 00
bounty on crops.....	300 00
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	\$8,469 70

RECEIPTS.

Cash balance from 1890	\$98 91
April warrant.....	2,200 00
May "	2,000 00
October "	3,140 00
December 9, 1891, of A. L. Chapman & Co., stumpage on wood cut on island No. 83.	29 22
December warrant.....	1,129 70
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EXPENDITURES.

For supplies to poor, sick and infirm	\$2,516 10
burial expenses	88 83
medicine and medical attendance.....	590 24
wood and wood hauling	1,046 92
spring dividends.....	450 30
contingent expenses.....	90 25
farming	771 45
superintendent of farming.....	150 00
schools.....	480 93
repairs to Old Town Indian Island school- house.....	8 05
fall dividends (annuity)	1,419 25
bounty on crops.....	284 90
salary of governor of tribe, Joseph Francis,	50 00
" lieutenant governor of tribe, Francis	
P. Socklexis.....	40 00
salary of priest	100 00
" Indian agent	200 00
Cash balance on hand.....	310 61
	<hr/>
	\$8,597 83

The following is the account of the shore rent collected by State in 1890, payable to members, February, 1891 :

RECEIPTS.

Balance from last year.....	\$48 91
March warrant	3,292 00
December warrant.....	90 00
	<hr/>
	\$3,430 91

CONTRA.

Paid to tribe per capita, as per accompanying receipts	\$3,150 00
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Paid on municipal account, State resolves of 1891, appropriating five per cent of shore-rent money for such use, for which see vouchers.....	\$145 40
Balance to new-year.....	135 51
	\$3,430 91

CENSUS.

The annual census of the tribe taken in January, 1891, as provided by law, makes the membership three hundred and eighty-six—a gain of nine over 1890. This is the first time, in a period covering a dozen years or more, that the yearly enumeration has not shown a small decrease from that of the year preceding.

AGRICULTURE.

A larger number of the tribe than usual have evidenced their interest in agriculture by planting seed and caring for crops. Several members, who in the past have conducted the largest and most successful farming operations, have attempted but little this season, owing chiefly to their advancing years; but others step forward to take their places though each in a smaller way, so that the aggregate result of labor is not lessened. While last year was remarkable for many and long continued rains, rather few and scanty have been the showers of this; yet the conditions have not been unfavorable, and a quite good harvest has been secured.

The crops raised subject to a bounty were as follows, viz :

Potatoes.....	3440	bushels.
Beans.....	155	“
Peas.....	68	“
Oats.....	698	“
Barley.....	20	“
Buckwheat.....	5	“
Root-crop....	366	“

SCHOOLS.

The principal school of the tribe—that on Old Town Indian Island, has been taught with usual success. Under the management of Sister Christina the pupils are showing a good degree of interest in their studies, and are made to feel the necessity of diligence in work, and punctuality of attendance. The quarters now provided for the school are really unequal to present needs, and teacher, pupils, parents and all interested agree, that a new school house will soon be a necessity,—a house larger, warmer, better ventilated and equipped than the present. It will be remembered that the Indians petitioned the last Legislature to appropriate three hundred dollars for repairs to the school house, and the sum of two hundred dollars was so granted. The amount was found insufficient to make the needed improvements; and after consulting with parents and teacher, I concluded to add to the old house a small porch at trifling expense, and carry over the balance of the appropriation to next year; trusting to obtain the consent of the Governor and Council of State to a change of plan, outlined as follows: *First*, a new location for a school building. The grounds of the present school house are quite limited in extent, low and poorly drained, and there is available another site, so much better in every respect that none could fail to appreciate its advantages. The site referred to is opposite the old Common and is, in fact, an extension of it, running from the main street easterly to the river. It adjoins the Convent or Church lot, and by its proximity, would accommodate the teachers, and, at the same time, be within easy reach of all the pupils. It is proposed to raise money by subscription and purchase this lot, it now being private property, set suitable shade trees, taking in also the old Common, and making this at once a play-ground for the school children and a modest little park for all. *Secondly*, a new school house. It is estimated that a good school building, with main and recitation rooms, and with ample accommodations and equip-

ments, would cost one thousand dollars. Of this amount, three hundred dollars is now on hand in school appropriation balances, two hundred or more could be obtained from sale of old school house and lot, leaving five hundred dollars to be had from other sources; and it is hoped that the State at the next meeting of the Legislature would provide what then might be lacking to complete this work fruitful of so much good to the Indians and of indirect benefit to all.

On Olamon Island, school has been taught two terms, with as good results as could be expected under the circumstances. The fact that Olamon families leave their homes for weeks at a time, in most such instances coming to the Old Town settlement, will explain why continuous and successful school work cannot be carried on there; but as the migrating children attend the Old Town Island school, more or less, they make up in part here what they lose by absence from home.

On Mattanawcock Island no school has been tried this year, such pupils as wish attending the Lincoln schools, their tuition and book charges being paid out of their school money, as per prearrangement. It seems probable that the appropriation for these scholars may well be made less hereafter, as the amount so granted has not all been required for either of two past years.

Mr. Harold C. Dow, school supervisor of Lincoln, speaks encouragingly of the progress made by his Indian pupils and attests to the kindness and impartiality shown them by teachers and fellow students.

IN GENERAL.

The life of the tribe during the year now passed, has moved on in its accustomed channels, and has been marked by few strange or untoward events. Death, as usual, has made its inroads, while, as indicated by the census, gains by birth and adoption have more than kept good the living ranks. The list of those removed by death comprises five adults and four children. Among the former is Sapiel Socklexis, an aged

and much respected leader. Never taciturn, but genial, honest and kind, possessing an ever ready fund of humor and industrious to a remarkable degree, he was well known much beyond the limits of his island home, and was a welcome visitor and friend to all. He had lived to round out his four-score years.

But few new buildings can be counted this year; though repairs and improvements have been made. The summer trade of the Indians is, in a small way, a sort of commercial barometer, indicating whether the general money market is easy or tight, and the readings of this barometer can be inferred quite correctly, by noting the number of new and improved dwellings among our island friends. Judged by this standard the readings were of mean height and the money market not easy. The holiday demand for baskets and other goods manufactured by the Indians has been good.

By the terms of a special act of the last Legislature, the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy agents are required to visit their respective charges twice a year, and report as to their condition at these times. The nearness of the chief settlement of the Penobscots to this Agency, and the mutual business relations existing, make the visits of the agent to them of not infrequent occurrence; while it truthfully can be said, that but few members of the tribe suffer many days to elapse before repeating their calls at the agency store. The two days that I have singled out for special remark are February 18th and November 24th. Upon the former occasion considerable sickness was prevalent, caused chiefly by colds. The average redman (like the average white) thinks himself hardier than he really is, and fails to take due precautions against the sudden and severe changes of our climate. The penalty is paid and, if he survives, a thin coating of caution acquired. This coating, I think, is more easily discernable than of old. As the winter months witness the most sickness, so the demand on the agency for supplies to sick and poor is by far the greatest during the cold season.

At the date above referred to, the well, who comprised a large majority, were engaged for the most part in basket work.

At the time of the November call there was comparative little sickness to be found, and preparations for winter were making. A few families having homes here were absent in Portland and vicinity, trying the now unusual experiment of living away from the reservation while filling basket orders for the Christmas trade. Most have since returned.

At this writing, the winter having set in, the prudent and thoughtful, after providing for their daily wants, begin to lay aside the surplus baskets for next summer's trade at the seaside resorts; knowing full well that even dull times are not wholly proof against the attraction of their pretty and useful wares, and that flush times will abundantly reward them for their skillful labor and wise forethought.

Respectfully submitted,

J. N. STOWE, *Agent.*

OLD TOWN, ME., December, 1891.