

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

---

Maine History Documents

Special Collections

---

1844

## First Quarterly Report of the Superintendent and Instructor of Schools in Madawaska Settlement

James C. Madigan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

ramp 646

**FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT**

OF THE

**SUPERINTENDENT AND INSTRUCTOR OF SCHOOLS**

IN

**MADAWASKA SETTLEMENT.**

---

**AUGUSTA:**

WM. R. SMITH & Co., PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

---

1844.

## REPORT

---

*To the Hon. the Governor and Council of the State of Maine,*  
the following REPORT is respectfully submitted.

After the confirmation of my appointment in pursuance of a resolve, entitled "resolve for the promotion of education in Madawaska settlement," under the direction of the Executive I proceeded, with as little delay as possible, to enter upon the execution of the duties assigned me.

In my opinion the term "Madawaska settlement" was intended to apply, not merely to the "Madawaska plantation," but to the entire portion of the French settlement of Madawaska upon the south side of the river St. John, within the limits and jurisdiction of the State of Maine. It was undoubtedly the intention of the legislature, and certainly the construction of your board, that the *entire* settlement on the St. John's river, from the east line of the State, as far up as the mouth of the Little Black river, a computed distance of eighty-five miles, would come within my supervision.

Immediately upon arriving, I produced my commission and the letters which I bore, and, both in private and in public, made known to the people throughout the extent of this territory the duties of my mission, and the means appropriated for its consummation. It was distinctly stated, that the sum of one thousand dollars had been allowed for these purposes—that, of that sum six hundred dollars were to be paid the superintendent and instructor for one year's services—fifty dollars were to meet traveling expenses and incidental charges, and fifty dollars to be expended in such way as might best serve to promote the object of the appointment, an account to be rendered of the same to the governor and council. The remaining three hundred dollars to be expended for the employment of necessary teachers. The greater part of the fifty dollars

last named has been already appropriated for the purchase of school books, which have been or are to be distributed among the pupils of the several schools. Assemblies of the people were had, at which the entire policy was laid before them, my instructions stated, and an earnest desire expressed to benefit as much as possible those for whose good this beginning was intended. I endeavored to explain the liberal intentions of the State, as connected with the establishment of schools and the furtherance of education among them, and labored to impress upon all minds the immense and very desirable advantages to be derived to themselves by zealous co-operation.

Somewhat restricted as to means, I designed at first to establish three schools, one in each Parish or Plantation; trusting thereby to give an opportunity for improvement to those most desirous; to fit if possible from among their own numbers some who might hereafter be able to conduct their primary schools, and to incite all to seek for future benefit at the well-spring of knowledge. It is gratifying to add, that my efforts were not unaided, and many at once expressed desire to increase the number contemplated. Under these circumstances, subscription was offered for this purpose, with what success notice will be made. Accordingly, subscription papers were prepared, and what money was raised in aid was placed in the hands of treasurers chosen for the purpose. These contributions were entirely *voluntary*. None of the money thus offered is in my keeping. The obligations, however, of the treasurers for the payment of these sums, I have; said sums to be appropriated towards the schools in the particular districts which have thus aided.

The price of boarding, in these settlements, is much greater than in any other section of the State, partly, in consequence of the premature frosts of the last year, partly, because of the difficulty of transportation from the Canadas, whither the French settlers almost universally resort for those necessaries and comforts of life, which only a more southern clime produces. For these reasons, together with the absolute necessity of procuring teachers, who have acquaintance with the French as well as the English language, I have been obliged to pay instructors a larger monthly sum than

many may have supposed would be necessary, and have even then obtained the proper ones with difficulty. An opinion has generally been received that the teachers of common schools, "the people's colleges," could and should labor for their mere daily bread, with a pittance more. But the friends of education, not only in our own country, but in the Old World, now perceive, that the dampened ardor, and the saddened heart of the instructor, quicken not, but rather repress the emulation and hope so desirable for the pupil. It is cheering to know that change is working upon this subject, and that he who stamps, in some degree, his own image upon the youthful mind, and "attunes to notes of gladness" the harp strings of the infant heart, is better able, than of yore, to keep his own powers, in "balanced and perfect harmony."

But to return, under discouraging circumstances, four teachers have already been obtained, at a compensation which very favorably compares with the general quantum of monthly wages, and during the week last past four schools established, of which I will speak in order. It must be remembered, however, in noticing the number of scholars, that I give them as of the first few days,—many others are yet to join each of these several schools.

The first I will mention is in what may be called the Registe Daigle district, four miles below the confluence of the Madawaska and St. John. Twenty-five scholars, their ages varying from five to fourteen years are in attendance. Of these, twenty-one study French—four attend to English as well as French—twenty-one commenced the alphabet. The amount of subscription paid to the treasurer was thirty-nine dollars—twenty dollars are yet due. Mr. Prudent Gagnon is the instructor—a young gentleman educated at St. Anne's College, Lower Canada. With him, as with the others, I have a written agreement. He is to receive twenty dollars per month, board inclusive. A large and convenient room is furnished without charge.

The second is in the Oliver Sirois district, at the confluence of the Madawaska and St. John. Thirty scholars are in attendance, their ages varying from four to thirty-seven. Twenty-seven attend to English—two to French and English—one to French alone.

Twenty-five commenced the alphabet. The amount of subscription in hands of treasurer is twenty-two dollars fifty cents. From thirty to thirty-five dollars are yet due. Mr. Michael Tighe has charge of this school, who for the present resides upon the British side of the river. Twenty dollars per month, board inclusive, constitute his compensation. A good room was kindly offered for this school. These two schools are embraced within the Parish of St. Basil, Madawaska plantation.

The third is near the upper Chapel, Parish of St. Luce, twelve miles above the confluence, and eight below Fort Kent. Thirty two scholars attend here, their ages varying from four to twenty seven years. Twelve study English—the remainder French. Sixteen commenced the alphabet. Nothing has, as yet, been subscribed here, although the parents are now desirous of aiding, and I doubt not will do so. Mr. James Hamel, who lives upon the American side, and has heretofore been a teacher, has charge of this school. In this place, I was obliged to hire a school room. The teacher is to receive sixteen dollars per month, board inclusive.

The fourth is at the mouth of the St. Francis river, and sixteen miles above Fort Kent. I cannot state as particularly as in the other cases, the number, ages and studies of the scholars who attend here, the return from said school not being at hand, but judge there will be thirty scholars to receive benefit, none of whom will be more than fourteen years old. Several of the settlers *here* came from the interior of the State many years since, and eagerly embrace an opportunity for the improvement of their children. From conversations had with these, and with their neighbors, the French, I think *all* of the children at this school will give their attention to English studies. Twenty dollars have been subscribed, and a room for the present furnished. An individual has offered a school house lot, and a building is to be commenced and fitted for occupation during the present month. Miss Elizabeth Baker, whose relatives are here situated, is the instructress. She is to receive eleven dollars per month—which amounts to the same as giving one dollar twenty-five cents per week, for services, and one dollar fifty cents, for boarding. The two last named are in Hancock plantation.

I hope to establish two other schools, within a few days, in Van Buren plantation—one at lower Chapel, eleven miles above east line of the State. For this, a sum in the vicinity of fifty dollars has been subscribed. In this district, there will be, perhaps, forty scholars, nearly all of whom will study English. The Parish house has been granted for use, and will be had until a school house can be built, which the people intend to do during the summer. A lot of land has been generously offered for a site.

Five miles below this, another will be located. Great interest is also felt *here*, in relation to education, and although the arrangements have not yet been fully completed, a desire of rendering as much assistance as possible, for the furtherance of the object, is manifested. In this district, there will be, at least, thirty-five pupils.—English studies will be mostly preferred.

It has been a paramount object with me to place these schools in positions as central as possible, so that "the greatest good of the greatest number" could be thus secured. In this, I believe, I have succeeded, and as can be perceived, in these districts, present opportunities are somewhat prized.

A few years since one or two small schools were supported by some of the more wealthy inhabitants, assisted by an allowance from the "Province government," but these benefits were confined to the few. Sowing and planting season is not yet over—its close will secure a *large* number of *additional* scholars.

The most desirable and important object to be accomplished by this mission, are to excite a strong *educational interest*—to give an acquaintance with *school discipline*—to distribute proper school books—to prepare instructors, and give direction for future management. All agree in, and must admit the propriety of such a course.

The books in use, and to be used, in these schools are, in English—"Primer of English language," "Spelling Book," "Young Reader," "History of United States of America, with Supplement," "The Child's Arithmetic, in Spirit of Pestalozzi's Method," "Smith's Practical and Mental Arithmetic," New Testament. In French—"Livre d' Enfance," "L' Eppellation," "Le Nouveau Testament." Pens, ink and writing books are also furnished.

As an acquaintance with the history of our country will be of vital importance to these interesting communities, I conceive that the easier and more agreeable method of imparting this knowledge will be through the conversational efforts of the instructors. With this view, I have obtained a few of these histories, which will be placed in the hands of the teachers, who will be required to recount to their pupils, in a familiar manner, the facts and inferences therein contained. This, it will be perceived, will give the teacher but little labor, comparatively; will secure to *all* the pupils the knowledge, which otherwise only the *few* would gain, and leave upon every mind a more durable impression than could in any other manner be produced.

Two of the officiating clergymen, here established, reside upon the American side, one is upon the British side of the river. It is but an award of justice to say, that much and very efficient aid has been rendered me by each of these three gentlemen. Their time, their counsel and contributions have been kindly, freely and liberally tendered. The exceeding interest manifested by them, for the furtherance of education and the success of this undertaking, has proved essentially beneficial.

The people also have evinced a sincere and earnest desire to increase the benefits to be derived from the appropriation of the legislature. Their subscriptions have been generously offered, and I only regret, that present circumstances allow not a further extension of my labors. It must not be forgotten, that these settlements are *extended lengthwise* upon the southern bank of the river, the distance between extremes being eighty-five miles. The difficulties arising from an entire absence of compactness can easily be imagined. Since my arrival, I have traveled more than four hundred miles, for the mere purposes of my mission, and when it is recollected that the passage of the St. John, (with its four mile current, swollen as it is during the spring time,) must be accomplished in a frail canoe, the travel of itself will be found to be worthy of notice.

It will be my object to visit each of the schools, as often as possible, during their continuance, and examinations, in the presence of the parents, will be regularly had. The rod and the ferula are

interdicted instruments, yet good order and perfect studiousness prevail.

As has been remarked, several adults attend. This certainly manifests a state of feeling, which must be particularly gratifying to all who really desire the spread of information in these settlements. The father and the son sit down together, to glean from the same treasure house. Thus native teachers will soon be fitted, and the certain spread of intelligence secured.

Several applications have been made by those residing upon the north side of the river for permission to send a few scholars into these schools, upon payment of a certainly monthly tuition. And when it is considered, that the parent and child, the brother and the sister, find themselves under the jurisdiction of different and distinct governments, separated as it were by a mere linear passing, could it be permitted *without injury to those for whose ESPECIAL benefit this mission was intended*, it might seem proper. Many upon our own shore have asked that such permission might be granted, but if at all permitted, it will be with cautiousness.

In the ability and integrity of the instructors already employed every confidence is placed, and I can but hope that the experiment here attempted will prove completely successful, and be but the precursor of many succeeding blessings to this peculiar and happy people. All of which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES C. MADIGAN, *Superintendent and  
Instructor of Schools in Madawaska settlement.*

MADAWASKA, June 13, 1844.

MR. MADIGAN'S REPORT

STATE OF MAINE.

---

IN COUNCIL, JULY 1, 1844.

*Ordered,* That one thousand five hundred copies of the Report of James C. Madigan, superintendent of schools at Madawaska, be printed, and that the secretary be directed to furnish the superintending school committee of each city, town and plantation, with one copy each, and one copy to the governor and council and each member of the legislature.

BARNABAS PALMER.

Read and passed.

ATTEST: P. C. JOHNSON,  
*Secretary of State.*

A true copy,

ATTEST: P. C. JOHNSON,  
*Secretary of State.*