

# Penobscot Culture

There is more to visiting and living in Mid-coast Maine than our local “Maine Culture” which some might describe as strong people who are fiercely independent, educated, civic-minded, and reclusive with a lot of plaid clothing. There is also our Penobscot Bay history and culture which is often hidden from view for the traveler today. For twelve-thousand years (yes, you read that right!) there have been inhabitants whom we call the Penobscot People (Native Americans). Even today, members of the Penobscot Tribe live in the region, some on a reservation at Indian Island near Bangor. We live on their land! The language of the Wabanakik (of which the Penobscot people belong) is called Abenaki. It is near extinction but efforts are being made to retain it.

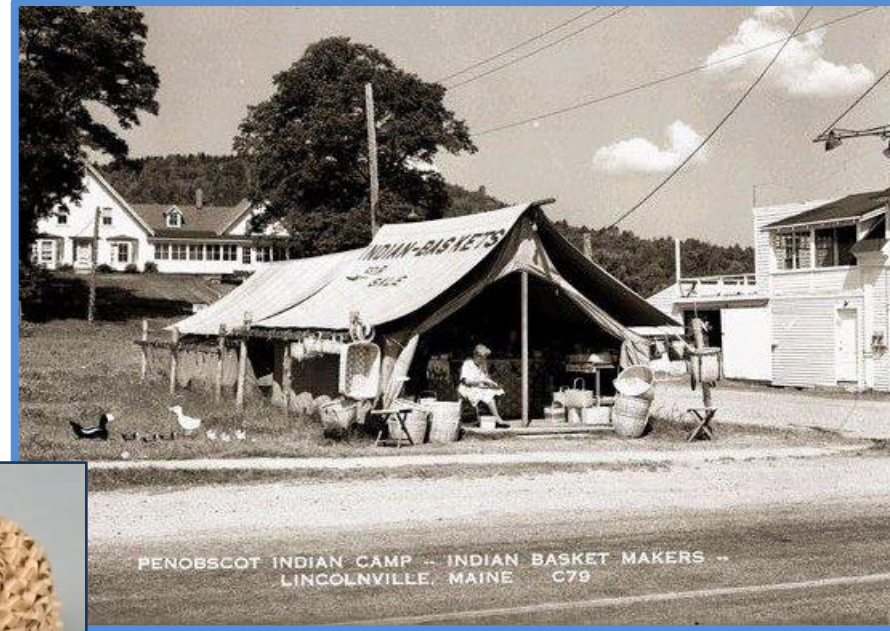
According to Kerry Hardy, author of *Notes on a Lost Flute*, Lincolnville (his home town) was land “taken from the Lobster Clan of the Penobscot” Tribe (p. 10).

The Penobscot were known for their basket-weaving, birch bark canoe-making, and other crafts. They were also great hunters and fishermen. They are known to have made maple sugar, placed it in birch-bark cones and gave them as gifts. The photo above shows Penobscot-made baskets being sold road-side by the beach in Lincolnville. The black and white images are from the **Penobscot**

**Marine Museum** collection in Searsport (just north of NOCASOBE) where more historical items from the Penobscot can be seen. Don’t miss this museum along with the Lincolnville Historical Society’s **Schoolhouse Museum** on Beach Rd. while you are in the Mid-coast.

Even today “Indian Baskets” are being sold in Lincolnville Beach and a historical collection of Penobscot baskets is available to view there.

It is our hope that you will, through Finding NOCASOBE, discover the rich and interesting history of our Penobscot Bay region and the people native to it. As visitors to the region or for those of us who live on this land, we often forget to learn about the history and culture of our native peoples. We have included the Penobscot culture on this regional website as recognition of those who owned the land, fished the waters, and sustained life through very tough times. There is nothing we can do to make up for the past except to reconcile. We will respect and honor the Penobscot in the present and the future! Respect the environment and be a welcoming community to all!



## General Information:



**Penobscot Bay Region** – “Glaciers covered what is now Maine until 16,000 years ago. Frozen snow and seawater created masses of ice one mile thick. But then the climate changed. After 3,000 years of melting, water draining from the Glaciers flooded the Penobscot River Valley all the way up to Millinocket. Slowly, with the weight of so much ice receding, the rocky Maine coast began to rise, until it looks like what it does today.” p. 6. *Giants of the Dawnland, Ancient Wabanaki Tales* by Alice Mean and Arnold Neptune.

**Wabanaki** – the name of the Maine region which means “Dawnland” or “People of the Dawn” and includes several tribes still inhabiting Maine (some on government established reservations and others living throughout the region – especially the Mid-coast and Downeast areas). “People of the Dawn” is significant because this is the first place where the sun rises. The best view is at Acadia National Park on Mt. Desert Island. Of the original 20 Wabanaki tribes (Wabanakik People) only four remain: the Penobscot, Micmac, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy.

**Penobscot** – means “where the water flows between the land”. The Penobscot River flows to Penobscot Bay between the main land of Mid-coast Maine and the coastal islands and on to the Atlantic Ocean (The Gulf of Maine).

**Penobscot Tribe** – traditionally known in their indigenous language as the penawahpskewi. Today they comprise one of four remaining tribes of the Wabanaki Confederacy. Their Tribal lands are greatly diminished because of European settlers and government refusal to honor treaties. Today the Reservation is located on Indian Island by Old Town along the Penobscot River.

**Language** – The Penobscot, Passamaquoddy-Maliseet and other Abenaki-based languages fall under the larger Algonquian language group. Kwey is hello! The Penobscot language was only a spoken language until recent linguists, with the help of Penobscot speakers, developed an alphabet.

**Lobster Clan** – the Penobscot people who inhabited the Camden Hills region of mid-coast Maine we now call NOCASOBE (North of Camden, South of Belfast) or Lincolnville, Islesboro, Ducktrap, and Northport. They often had the surname Mitchell and have, as they migrated further inland, continued its use.



**Verrazano’s visit to Maine** – the Italian explorer, Giovanni de Verrazano, in 1524 sailed up the coast of New England in search of a passage to the Orient. He stopped first in what is now Rhode Island and then made his way to what is now Maine. In his records of the voyage, he recounts how their expedition felt unwelcome in Maine by comparison to the warmer welcome received in southern New England (he believed there had been prior European visitors to the region that may have provoked the native peoples). “We found a more elevated country, full of very thick woods of fir trees, cypresses, and the like, indicative of a cold climate. The people were entirely different from the others we had seen, whom we had found kind and gentle, but these were so rude and barbarous that we were unable by any signs we could make to hold communication with them. They clothe themselves in skins of bears, lynxes, seals, and other animals. Their food, as far as we could judge by several visits to their dwellings, is obtained by hunting and fishing, and certain fruits, which are a sort of root of spontaneous growth. They have no pulse, and we saw no signs of cultivation; the land appears sterile and unfit for growing of fruit or grain of any kind.” p.23, *Indian New England 1524-1674*. The harsh terrain and climate would have explained the need for heavy fur and skin-made clothing. As for their demeanor, many explorers came to take resources and killed along the way leaving great mistrust on the part of the native peoples.

**History** – a good description of the history of the Wabanaki can be found at: [http://www.passamaguoddy.com/?page\\_id=24](http://www.passamaguoddy.com/?page_id=24)



**Historical Trauma** – *“Historical trauma, also known as intergenerational trauma, is defined as increasing emotional and psychological wounding across generations that stems from massive group trauma. The massive group trauma experienced by Native people has occurred across generations beginning with the taking of their land, lives (through murder, bounties, war and disease), children (through residential schools, adoption and foster care), language, spiritual practices and impoverishment. The taking of Native people’s traditional ways of dealing with grief compounds the impact of trauma by undermining their capacities to care for one another and to promote healing from these harms.”* - Dr. Rebecca Sockbeson, Penobscot Tribal Citizen, University of Alberta See: <http://mainewabanakireach.org> In the 1980s, Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, Ph.D., developed the concept called **historical trauma** to better understand the impact of historical events on Native American people – in the present day. This body of knowledge helped to explain the drastic disparities among Native people and Native communities.

**Places to Visit:**

Site	Description/Hours	Address	Phone	Email	Website
<b>ABBE Museum</b>	<b>Abbe Downtown</b> - Museum and Shop Summer Hours - Late May through early November Open Daily 10-5 Winter Hours Open Thursday - Saturday, 10-4 Closed January <b>Abbe Museum at Sieur de Monts</b> Spring Summer Hours (Closed in the Winter) - Late May through mid-October Open Daily 10-5	Bar Harbor	207-288-3519	<a href="mailto:info@abbemuseum.org">info@abbemuseum.org</a>	<a href="http://www.abbemuseum.org">http://www.abbemuseum.org</a>
<b>Camden Hills State Park</b>	Mt. Battie and Camden Hills State Park were points of navigation for the native peoples and settlers. Megunticook (the current name derived from native language: bedabedec) was believed to look like a whale laying on the land. There are 7 hiking trails. The Bald Rock Trail (enter from Rt. 173 at Steven’s Corner) is regarded as one of the most beautiful walks in the world.	280 Belfast Rd, Rt. 1, Camden-Lincolnville	207-236-3109		<a href="http://www.stateparks.com/camden_hills.html">http://www.stateparks.com/camden_hills.html</a>
<b>Ducktrap Basket Shop</b>	Ducktrap Basket shop was in a tent on Lincolnville Beach. Now the baskets are displayed in a great old barn just north of the beach. Upstairs, don't miss the Basket Museum with a great collection of native hand-made baskets.	2790 Atlantic Hwy. (Rt. 1), Lincolnville Beach	207-789-5272		

<b>Hudson Museum</b>	The Maine Native American collection boasts 400 objects, including the largest institutional collection of Penobscot basket-making tools in the region. Museum Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	University of Maine – Orono	207-581-1904	<a href="mailto:HUDSONMUSEUM@UMIT.MAINE.EDU">HUDSONMUSEUM@UMIT.MAINE.EDU</a>	<a href="http://www.umaine.edu/hudsonmuseum">http://www.umaine.edu/hudsonmuseum</a>
<b>Passamaquoddy Reservations</b>	Pleasant Point Reservation is located in the easternmost region of the United States, in the town of Perry, on a narrow peninsula leading to the island community of Eastport. Pleasant Point is one of two Reservations of the Passamaquoddy Tribe. Indian Township Reservation is located inland about 50 miles from Pleasant Point.	Pleasant Point and Indian Township	207-796-2301		<a href="http://wabanaki.com">http://wabanaki.com</a> <a href="http://www.passamaquoddy.com">http://www.passamaquoddy.com</a>
<b>Passamaquoddy Nation Museum</b>	Waponahki Museum	Pleasant Point, Perry	207-853-4500	<a href="mailto:bMITCHELL@WAPONAHKIMUSEUM.ORG">bMITCHELL@WAPONAHKIMUSEUM.ORG</a>	<a href="http://waponahkimuseum.org">http://waponahkimuseum.org</a>
<b>Penobscot Marine Museum</b>	Museum Hours: October 21, 2013 through May 23, 2014 - Museum Framer and Museum Shop are open Thursday through Saturday, 11am to 4pm May 24 through October 19, 2014 - The entire Museum campus is open Monday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm, Sunday noon to 5pm	40 East Main Street (U.S. Route 1) in Searsport	207-548-0334	<a href="mailto:KGOLDNER@PMM-MAINE.ORG">KGOLDNER@PMM-MAINE.ORG</a>	<a href="http://penobscotmarinemuseum.org">http://penobscotmarinemuseum.org</a>
<b>Penobscot Nation Museum</b>	“The Penobscot Nation Museum is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich cultural heritage of the Penobscot and Wabanaki people. The museum houses collections that span thousands of years of history. The museum features birch bark canoes, walking sticks, root clubs, numerous historical photos, traditional garments and ceremonial wear, basketry materials, tools, and finished products, as well as contemporary art.” Museum Hours: Monday-Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	12 Down St., Indian Island, ME 04468	207-827-4153	<a href="mailto:James.Neptune@firekpr@hotmail.com">James Neptune at firekpr@hotmail.com</a>	<a href="http://penobscotnation.org/museum">http://penobscotnation.org/museum</a>



<b>Penobscot Reservation</b>	<p>The Penobscot Nation Cultural &amp; Historic Preservation Department approves visits to the reservation and arranges tours for individuals and groups. It is possible to visit the Penobscot Museum and the Princess Watahwaso's Family Museum. With a trained guide, visit the many departments and programs that comprise the government center of the Penobscot Nation: the Tribal Council Chambers, the Tribal Court, Penobscot Cultural Medicine Trail, the Department of Natural Resources, the Indian Island School, and the Sockalexis Bingo Palace. Be sure to visit the Cultural and Historic Preservation Department and Che' Molly's Trading Post.</p> <p>Please note the Penobscot Nation Tribal Council has passed an ordinance prohibiting picture taking without consent from the Chief's Office.</p>	12 Wabanaki Way, Indian Island, ME 04468	207-817-7477	<a href="mailto:info@penobscotculture.com">info@penobscotculture.com</a>	<a href="http://penobscotnation.org">http://penobscotnation.org</a>
<b>Schoolhouse Museum</b>	Open during the summer months through Labor Day: Monday-Friday 12 noon - 3:00pm, Saturday 12 noon - 3:00pm, Sunday 1:00pm - 4:00pm	Beach Rd. (Rt. 173), Lincolnville Beach	207-789-5445	<a href="mailto:lhs@sent.com">lhs@sent.com</a>	<a href="http://www.lincolnvillehistory.org">http://www.lincolnvillehistory.org</a>
<b>Tarratine Tribe (IORM) Bingo</b>	Times: Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 4-9pm; Sunday 3-8pm	153 Main Street, Belfast	207-338-1682	<a href="mailto:tarratinetribe13@yahoo.com">tarratinetribe13@yahoo.com</a>	<a href="http://www.redmen.org">http://www.redmen.org</a>
<b>University of Maine Wabanaki Center</b>	"The Center is committed to building and sustaining a mutually beneficial relationship between the University of Maine and Native American communities. It is a gathering place for indigenous scholars engaged in advancing Wabanaki studies through teaching, research and publication."	5724 Dunn Hall, Room 315, University of Maine at Orono,	207-581-1417	<a href="mailto:John.Mitchell@umit.maine.edu">John.Mitchell@umit.maine.edu</a>	<a href="http://www.naps.umaine.edu">http://www.naps.umaine.edu</a>

***Abenaki Language:***

**Penobscot Pronunciation Guide** (pdf available for download from [www.penobscotculture.com](http://www.penobscotculture.com)): <http://www.penobscotculture.com/images/Penobscot-Pronunciation-Guide.pdf>

## References and Resources:

*Giants of the Dawnland, Ancient Wabanaki Tales* by Alice Mean and Arnold Neptune (Lt. Governor of the Penobscot Nation), Loose Canon Press, 1996. ISBN 1-888-034-01-7

*Indian New England Before the Mayflower*. By Howard Russel, University Press of New England, 1980.

*Indian New England 1524-1674, A Compendium of Eyewitness Accounts of Native American Life*, edited by Ronald Dale Karr, Branchline Press, 1999.

*Notes on a Lost Flute, A Field Guide to the Wabanaki* by Kelly Harden, Down East Press, 2009.

The Algonquin Legends of New England or Myths and Folk Lore of the Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot Tribes, by Charles G. Leland, Riverside Press/Houton, 1884.

Twelve Thousand Years, American Indians in Maine, by Bruce J. Bourque, University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

## Online:

Penobscot Culture <http://www.penobscotculture.com>

Maine Wabanaki REACH <http://mainewabanakireach.org>

Don't miss this YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hepvpi-PIRc>

