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Tribal Government Services-FA

JUN 14 1983

Mr. Leonard J. Medor
P.O. Box 276
Swanton, Vermont 05488

Dear Mr. Medor:

As required by the Acknowledgment regulations (25 C.F.R. 83, formerly Part 54), the Branch of Federal Acknowledgment has completed a preliminary review of the Abenaki petition for obvious deficiencies and significant omissions. The petition as a whole is well organized and is thoughtfully and carefully presented. We recognize the difficulties in obtaining certain kinds of data for specific time periods. There are, however, a number of areas in which additional information, if available, is necessary to assist in our consideration of the petition.

Can information be provided, through oral history and other sources, for the period from 1800 to 1920 concerning informal leaders and their activities, and for the social activities, mutual assistance, etc., that linked individual families in the greater Swanton area? If possible, please elaborate further on the information already provided concerning these questions for the 1920 to 1970 period, especially regarding neighborhoods other than Back Bay.

Can you provide additional information concerning the existence of groups, neighborhoods or linked families of Abenakis in the greater Swanton area from 1800 to 1940? Further information is also needed concerning documented identification of such groups as Abenaki or as Indian in the greater Swanton area during this period, as opposed to the identification of specific individuals as Abenaki or Indian.

The historical relationship from 1800 onward between the Abenakis of Odanak and Becancour and those of the aboriginal Missisquoi area is not discussed at length in the petition. Please provide a more detailed discussion of this relationship in different periods up to the present, including social contacts, migration in either direction, and shared territory and social activities.

The petition states that there are approximately 750 children under the age of 15 who are not included on the current list provided. If these children are considered members of the group, even though they are non-voting members, they should be included on the group's membership roll for acknowledgment purposes. It is important that the group's membership list/roll be complete since, if recognized, the list submitted for acknowledgment purposes could logically become the group's base roll. As such, the roll, except for minor additions and corrections, is likely to be binding on the group for some time to come.

If the approximately 750 children are considered members of the Abenaki Nation of Vermont, please submit information about them including name, address, age/date of birth, and parents. We noted on page 169 of the petition that member's names have been placed on file cards. If no list of the children is available, we would be willing to work with xerox copies of the individual file cards which were prepared for these members.

Finally, we are requesting a copy of the Articles of Incorporation of the Abenaki Self Help Association, Inc. (ASHAI); a sample of minutes of tribal council and ASHAI meetings, two or three per year, for the years they are available; and copies of the meeting minutes (including attendance lists) for meetings which deal with the adoption of the constitution of the Abenaki Nation of Vermont and any revision which may have occurred subsequently.

The attached appendix requests further information and materials. While we do not consider the petition deficient for lack of these data and materials, their submission would be of great help to our staff in the evaluation of the Abenaki petition. We will be grateful for any of the materials you can provide us. We thank you for your cooperation in this request. Members of the Acknowledgment staff will be in touch with you within a week or two to discuss further the details of this letter. In the meantime, if you have any specific questions about the contents of the letter, or if we can be of help in any way, please do not hesitate to call our office.

Sincerely,

AS/ John R. Quinn

Deputy Assistant Secretary -
Indian Affairs (Operations)

Enclosure

cc: Surname
400:440:440B:101A:Mailroom
Holdup:WQuinn:6/3/83:343-3568:glb

APPENDIX: FURTHER DATA AND MATERIALS NEEDED
FOR ABENAKI PETITION

Further explanations or descriptions are needed on the following points concerning the social organization of the group:

1. An elaboration of the internal political processes around the creation of the tribal council, i.e., the roles of individual informal leaders, etc.
2. Information on the current size and status of the Missisquoi and Eastern Woodlands Abenaki bands.
3. A discussion of continued practice of distinct customs and use of the Abenaki language by the group in the past 86 years as well as today.
4. An explanation of the current "kindreds" both as seen by the group itself and as seen by the researchers.
5. To clarify the text of the petition, a list of which families are "central families" and a list of all others, including briefly how each was determined to be Abenaki.

Please provide the following materials if they are available:

1. A complete list of past and present council and committee members, and ASHAI Board of Directors members.
2. Copies of the needs assessment and HUD and ANA grants, and a list of any other grant applications, awards, or proposals submitted by either the Abenaki Nation of Vermont or the ASHAI during the past five years.
3. More detailed information on the 1788 Ira Allen court case.
4. Page 172 of the petition, which was missing upon receipt of the petition in our offices.

The questions and requests for materials in the paragraphs below deal primarily with membership-related issues.

1. Please provide us with a copy of the enfranchisement form used to gain formal membership status. Are completed forms available for each of the members listed on the "Tribal Roll" submitted with the petition? If not, how many members listed have completed forms on file?
2. A resolution or statement of certification is needed for the group's membership roll which identifies it as their current roll as of May 11, 1983. As explained in the May 16, 1979, policy letter (copy enclosed), this certification should be signed by members of the group's governing body or membership committee.
3. Page 50 of the "Tribal Roll" submitted with the petition is incomplete along the left margin. Please furnish a complete copy of this page.

4. A review of Section I of the constitution raises several questions concerning terminology and the existence of other rolls. Please clarify each of the items discussed below:
- a) Section I(1), page 163, states "A Tribal list shall be maintained, on which shall be recorded the name of every person who is determined by the Tribal Council to be entitled to be registered in the Abenaki Nation of Vermont." Is this a list of persons who consider themselves to be members or is it a list of persons who are believed to be of Abenaki ancestry and, therefore, entitled to membership if they submitted the necessary paperwork?
 - b) Section I(2), page 163, refers to "Band lists" and "Tribal list." Please explain the difference between the two types of lists as perceived by the Abenaki governing body.
 - c) Section I(3), page 164, mentions a "Tribal list of the Abenaki Nation of Vermont" as of December 31, 1975. Please provide us with a copy of this list.
 - d) Section I(4), page 164, refers to the "Grand List of the Abenaki Nation." How does this list relate to other lists mentioned in Section I(2) and (3)? Who maintains the "Grand List?" Please provide us with a copy of this list.
5. Genealogical materials submitted were grouped into three bundles, each of which was alphabetically arranged. The top folder of one of the bundles was marked "Central Families." Please explain the significance of the bundle arrangement.

A number of major sources referred to frequently in the petition text have not been provided. Please provide a copy of the following which, if not provided by you, would be difficult for us to obtain (if necessary, copies can be made by us of the shorter documents and the originals returned to you). They are: Jane S. Baker's report to Governor Salmon (1976); Gordon Day's "Missisquoi: A New Look at an Old Village" (1973) and "Abenaki Place-Names in the Champlain Valley" (1981); copies of all relevant articles from Abby Hemenway's Vermont Historical Gazetteer (1868, 1882); John Moody's manuscript on "Missisquoi" (1979); copies of any town, parish, school or other local records referred to in the petition; and transcripts or more detailed extracts of the oral history referred to in the petition text.