

STOCKBRIDGE INDIANS.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE CHIEFS AND SACHEMS OF THE "INDIAN PARTY"
OF THE STOCKBRIDGE INDIANS,

PRAYING FOR

The repeal of the law of Congress of 1842 for their relief.

FEBRUARY 17, 1846.

Read, and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The memorial of the chiefs and sachems of the "*Indian party*" of the Stockbridge Indians, residing in the Territory of Wisconsin,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWS:

That the said "*Indian party*" has heretofore, by petition and otherwise, applied to your honorable body for assistance, in the many difficulties which surround them, and for relief from the wrongs which have been so unjustly inflicted upon them and their people. Their supplications have hitherto been unheeded. From the repeated applications made by them to the government, and the neglect of Congress to give ear to their complaints and afford them the relief which they think themselves entitled to, they have become discouraged; and had, until recently, made up their minds to submit to their fate, however hard, rather than renew complaints which have so long remained unheeded. But recent events have added to their sufferings, and now impel them to *make one more effort to obtain justice*, or at least *excite the sympathies of the good and great*.

Under the law of Congress, passed in 1842, for "*the relief of the Stockbridge Indians*," &c., (by which law an attempt is made to *force* your petitioners to become "*citizens of the United States*,") the "*citizen party*," so called, headed by two or three ignorant and troublesome *white men*, who are connected with the tribe by marriage, or otherwise, have gone on to

organise a township under the laws of said Territory; and, to carry into effect their object, have assessed and taxed all the lands in the reservation, whether improved or wild, and including those belonging to married women and young children; that the tax so assessed is excessive, and is levied, notwithstanding a correct and complete map and survey of their reservation have never been made and returned, and although not a single patent has yet been issued by the United States for any of these lands; nor has the said tribe ever been officially or legally informed that its members are citizens, or hold their lands in severalty, in fee simple. Your petitioners further show, that being very poor, they were totally and wholly unable to pay these or any taxes whatever. And in consequence of the non-payment of the tax, the collector of taxes (who is one of their "Indian brothers,") seized the cattle, farming utensils, and other articles of personal property belonging to those who could not or would not pay, and drove them away; and a few days since the same were sold at public auction, or rather wholly sacrificed, to pay this unjust and oppressive tax; that in some instances these seizures were made of the last cow, or hog, belonging to widows and very indigent persons. And your petitioners refer you to the following as a few of the extremely hard cases which occurred in the course of this infamous and oppressive procedure, on the part of those calling themselves "citizens," urged on and misled by evil counsellors and a few bad white men:

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|---|---|---|---|--------|
| A. E. Quinney—a pair of steers, sold for | - | - | - | \$5 50 |
| Hannah Marquis, a sick and poor widow—a heifer calf, sold for | - | - | - | 2 42 |
| Johr Metoxen—2 heifer calves, sold for | - | - | - | 3 65 |
| Didemica Bigdeer—1 heifer, sold for | - | - | - | 6 72 |
| Benjamin Pye, sen.—1 bull calf, sold for | - | - | - | 62 |
| Abram Pye—1 log chain, sold for | - | - | - | 61 |
| Jonas Thompson—1 fur hat, sold for | - | - | - | 27 |
| Simon Metoxen—1 box stove, sold for | - | - | - | 1 75 |

Your petitioners comprise more than one-half of the small remnant of a tribe once warlike and powerful. They compose what is called the "Indian party" of the Stockbridge nation. They glory as much in the name of "Indians" and the sons of the "forest," as does every true American in that of "American." They have ever been Indians, and, as such, have enjoyed perfect liberty and true happiness. They can never be made more prosperous than under their own laws and customs, and in the exercise of their rights and privileges according to the notions and practices of their forefathers—so they wish to remain; yet, while they ask this privilege, they do not wish to deprive their more enlightened and civilized brothers and sisters of the right to become citizens and whites; but most of your petitioners being *old*, they are satisfied that their natures and dispositions can no more be changed, than can their skins be made white and transparent.

These reasons, together with others already urged upon your honorable body, embolden your petitioners to renew their applications, and to ask that the high and mighty of this great nation may take their case and suffering into serious consideration, and grant to them such relief as in their wisdom may seem meet and proper; that such measures may be taken in their behalf as will, for the future, (during the short period allotted to the red man) secure to them peaceful homes, beyond the visits of

the "tax collector," the more unwelcome call of the bailiff, and the influence of designing and scheming whites, who are willing to unite with their tribe for the sole purpose of cheating and deceiving them.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

AUSTIN E. QUINNEY, *Sachem.*

John Metoxen,

Joseph M. Quinney,

Thomas S. Branch,

Doctor Big Deer,

Moses Charls,

Peter D. Littleman,

Samuel Miller,

John Yoccom,

Benjamin Duxtator,

Simon S. Metoxen,

Washington Quinney,

Z. T. Peters,

Benjamin Pye 2d, his x mark.

Garet Thompson,

Jonas Thompson,

Benjamin Pye 1st, his x mark.

Benjamin Pye 4th, his x mark.

Abram Pye, his x mark.

Elisha Ronkapot, his x mark.

Thomas Scenendo.

STOCKBRIDGE, *January, 1846.*