

States of Maine and New Hampshire, all of which may be considered as embraced under the name of Abenakis, or more properly Wanbanakkie. It has often been supposed that this name was given them by the French, but it is undoubtedly their original appellation, being derived from Wanbanban, which may be defined the people of aurora borealis or northern light.

It is only now intended to sketch their earlier history, and to trace the various emigrations to the present residence of the Abenakis proper, in Canada; and viewing this tribe as the living representative of our extinct ones, to consider its interesting history, so clearly connected with New England frontier life, although most of that history is but a record of war and wretchedness.

The celebrated discoverer, Capt. John Smith, in his general history, furnishes the earliest and most reliable description of the Indians on the coast of Maine, as they were in 1614; other writers give accounts of tribes there, some of which it is difficult to distinguish or locate; but it may be best to consider all that were residing in the two States above-mentioned as embraced in about eight distinct tribes, namely: Penobscots or Tarrentines, Passamaquodies or Sybayks, Wawenocks, Norridgewoks or Canibas, Assagunticooks, Sokokis or Pequakets, Pennacooks, Malacitas or St. Johns.

The Penobscots¹ were probably the most numerous and influential tribe. Their chief or bashaba was said to have been acknowledged as a superior as far as Massachusetts Bay. They occupied the country on both sides of the Penobscot Bay and River; their summer resort being near the sea, but during the winter and spring they inhabited lands

¹ For a pleasant and very well-written account of this tribe, by Hon. Lorenzo Sabine, see the *Christian Examiner* for 1857.