

PETITION
FOR
FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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DOI/AS-IA/OFA
Washington, DC

of

THE
SCHAGHTICOKE INDIAN TRIBE
(also known as SIT)

Submitted by:

CHIEF ALAN RUSSELL

on behalf of

**Co- Chairman Steven Birch and the Council Members Jason Lamb, Jeffrey Kilson, Eric McDonald
and Deborah Richards**

On or about November 20, 2020

Part I

INTRODUCTION

The following documents, articles, letters, maps, diaries, autobiographies, and records, etc. including a historical narrative which we have carefully researched and written constitutes the Documented Petition for Federal Acknowledgment of the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe of Connecticut, which has been submitted for your review.

Our current headquarters for the Tribe is located in Kent, Connecticut within the County of Litchfield. Our Federal Acknowledgment Project address is:

Schaghticoke Indian Tribe
322 Schaghticoke Road
P.O. Box 111
Schaghticoke Indian Reservation
Kent, Connecticut 06757

A majority of the materials provided, including the immense research effort taken to document our Tribe's past and present condition was a largely collective effort. The foundation for this endeavor was to provide the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Federal Acknowledgment with a factual and comprehensive historical record. The monumental task of tracking the history of our Tribe employed members of the Tribe itself in piecing together the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe's rich history from documentation dating back to the early 1800s.

A key individual in creating our Tribe's historical narrative is Lucianne Lavin, PhD. Ms. Lavin aided us in painting a dynamic picture of the Schaghticoke Tribe's colorful and extensive history throughout her intensive research and dedication.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chief Alan Russell

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Official Name of the Petitioner

The name of the Petitioner is the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe, abbreviated as "SIT".

B. Location/Headquarters

The location of the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe is within the Connecticut State boundary. The Tribe is in the region of the town of Kent, within the border of the County of Litchfield.

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Kent, Connecticut 06757

C. Other Contact Information

Alan Russel (860) 310-7044 same address above

D. Number of current living members

The current list of Schaghticoke tribal members includes forty four adults.

E. Current officers and members of governing body

Co-Chairman Steven Birch
Council Members Deborah Richards , Jeffrey Kilson, Jason Lamb and Eric Macdonald

F. Names of attorney(s) and other non-members authorized to represent group before the Department

William Buchanan
(914) 760-1166

G. Statement of basic overall claim for Federal acknowledgment as an Indian tribe, summarizing the petitioner's continuous existence, from 1900 to present

The Schaghticoke Indian Tribe has been identified as a distinct, continuous community from historical times to present. SIT has existed on their present land prior to the advent of non-Native people. As the State of Connecticut formed, the land has continued to be reserved for the Schaghticokes. The record shows how the Tribe has allocated its collective resources, excluded members and non-members from its reservation, made decisions on behalf of the entity, mobilized its members, addressed internal conflict over tribal property, goals, and decisions, and had significant official relationships with other governments, including federally recognized tribes. Documentation has been listed for each regulatory criterion organized by time period. Associated documents are cited and provided electronically and in hard copy via filing boxes. Additional batches of materials have been provided to the Office of Federal Acknowledgement over the decades and are already part of the record, further supporting these criteria.

The Schaghticoke Indian Tribe has resided in and around what is now Kent, Connecticut for over hundreds of years. As detailed below, the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe has had a long history of tribal relations with the Colonial government of Connecticut as well as the State of Connecticut. The State has enacted specific laws addressing issues involving the Schaghticoke Tribe including land sales, leases, establishment of state funds, official State recognition of the Tribe, establishment of a reservation at Kent and numerous State government dealings with the Tribe. The Federal government is and has also been involved with the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe, including litigation involving Schaghticoke land claims and the federal acknowledgment process involving the group purporting to be a Schaghticoke Tribal Nation.

The Schaghticoke Indian Tribe has maintained its political and community identity for hundreds of years and is centered around a number of well-defined families who form the core of the tribe. The 400-acre reserve at Kent, Connecticut is central to the Tribe's identity. This Petition will address in a summary fashion, the history of the Tribe prior to 1900 but will focus more specifically on the new evidentiary requirements established in 25 CFR Part 83 (originally published on July 15, 2015).

The Schaghticoke Indian Tribe currently has a five-member Tribal Council organized under its 2002 Constitution. The Chairman of the Council is Alan Russell and the Co-Chairman is Steven Birch. The other Council members are Deborah Richards, Jeffrey Kilson, Jason Lamb and Eric Macdonald. The State of Connecticut continues to reserve 400 acres of land for the Tribe. Chairman Alan Russell and Vice Chairman Gail Donovan, currently reside on the Reservation. The Tribe is a State recognized Tribe by the State of Connecticut.

As the record regularly repeats, Gideon Mauwee was the first leader of the Tribe recorded by non-members. Mauwee family residents at Schaghticoke are listed in the Moravian baptismal records and other 18th century documents. Current membership is derived from this leader, and at the turn of the 20th century, there were several core family groups composing the membership of the Schaghticoke Indian Tribe including the Russells, Harrises, Kilsos, Bradleys, and Cogswells (a.k.a. Cogswells).

Prior to the 1900s, the Kilsos lived on the Reservation. Parmelia Kilson (maiden name, Mauwee) was the mother of Value and Julia Kilson. Value was a respected Reservation leader who fathered Mary, Fred, and Charles W. Kilson, whose line continued through Robert L., Bertha, and Earl S. Kilson, again, all active within the record and on the Reservation. Mary Kilson married Peter Jessen and their children, Bertha, and Katherine and Julia, and then, Ethel M., Earl S., and grandson Russell Kilson, have a constant and recurring presence in the affairs of the Tribe and on the Reservation through the 20th century.

Julia, Value's sister, married Truman (Mauwee) Bradley, from whom Sarah Lavinia Bradley was born. Sarah married George Cogswell (originally Cocksuer, Cocksure). The Cocksure family is mentioned in the Moravian documents as mid-18th century residents at Schaghticoke. George and his father Jabez Cogswell left the Reservation to serve in the Civil War and returned thereafter. Sarah and George were parents of William, Frank, and Truman Cogswell and Julia Cogswell Batie. This family line, along with the Kilsos, have a continued presence on the Reservation throughout the 1900s. George was acknowledged by outsiders as the chief of the Tribe until his death in 1923. After his death, William, then Frank, Cogswell served as chief of the Schaghticoke Tribe in the early and mid-1900s. Both were instrumental in initiating the Tribe's land claims. After Frank's death in 1953, William's son Theodore became chief (e.g., see November 1958 letter to Theodore from Elawaththum Bearce, acknowledging Ted as sachem of the Tribe and the May 1963 "writ" submitted by tribal leaders to the United States District Court of Record and Common Pleas, New Haven, CT, (Elawaththum Bearce, "United States District Court of Record and Common Pleas, New Haven, Connecticut", May 7&11, 1963).

The HARRISES came into the fold prior to the 1900s as well, when Abigail Mauwee and Henry (Pan) Harris had a son, James Harris who married Sarah Collins Snyder. There is significant documentation discussing Henry Pan Harris, who was a gunsmith, tinsmith, a day laborer who worked around the surrounding farms in the State of Connecticut, and a well-known basket maker who sold Native baskets to the local whites in the mid to late 1800s. Their family line populates the record and Schaghticoke membership. His son James, a mailman and Protestant minister with a congregation of whites and Indians, who died in 1909 at the age of 59, and Sarah Harris, had many children, among them Grace Harris, Howard Harris, and Elsie V. Harris Dwy Russell, whose families were on the Reservation during the century under review here. [REDACTED] and hence, that name became a significant part of the tribal membership. Howard Harris held up the annual tradition of the snake hunt and also continued the tribal basket tradition within his family. He tried to return to the Reservation in the 1950s but was denied entry by the State. Howard was chief of the tribe after Ted Cogswell until his death in the mid-1960s. He left a son, Irving Harris, who followed his father as chief and continued to lead the Tribe's land claims.

After her first marriage, [REDACTED] married Alan J. Russell, and incorporated that name and lineage into the Tribe. [REDACTED] Today Alan Russell, son of William Russell, remains as Tribal Chairman on the Reservation.

These primary families were the core of those continuing to inhabit the Reservation throughout the past 100 years, and whose descendants currently reside on the Schaghticoke Reservation. There is extensive discussion of these families and the ancestry of the Tribe in the government's Proposed Finding on the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation. SIT has always disputed STN's reliance on its family history but relies in part on the evidentiary findings of the BIA.