

SIC-Concise Written Narrative



Salyersville Indian Community- Concise Written Narrative for Petition for Acknowledgment as an Indian Tribe

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April 29, 2025

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PREPARED IN FULFILLMENT OF 25 CFR 83

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I. Introduction regarding petitioning group

A-F: n/a

G. Statement of basic overall claim for Federal acknowledgment as an Indian tribe, summarizing the petitioner's continuous existence, from 1900 to present (1-2pages)**I. Introduction to the Salyersville Indian Community****a. (Abstract Statement 1-2 pages)****(I.g) Statement of basic overall claim for Federal acknowledgment as an Indian tribe,****b. Description of the SIC's continuous social and political existence from 1900 to the present (2)a****I. Introduction to the Salyersville Indian Community and a Summary of their Social and Political History from 1900 to present.**

a. Abstract Statement One hundred and twenty-five years ago, the 1900 Federal Census showed a distinct community of people on the Indian Population Schedule for the Salyersville District of Magoffin County, Kentucky.¹ That population today is known as the Salyersville Indian Community. The Salyersville Indian population has since persisted as a distinct community of people whose membership are centered in the Salyersville area of Magoffin County in East Kentucky, the sister settlement at Carmel, Ohio,² and certain locations of outmigration undertaken for economic reasons, those being to Oklahoma in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and to specific locations in Ohio and Michigan in the first half of the 20th century.³

The Salyersville Indian Community (SIC) is a composite Indigenous population comprised of descendants of *Valentine Collins'* family of Christian Saponi who were joined in residence and intermarriage with the self-asserting and widely acknowledged "Indian" families of *John* and *Cuzzie (Anderson) Cole (Chenoska)* and that of *Bryce Gibson* and his wives. Those family's previous historic tribal affiliation(s) remain obscure and unconfirmed (see below). Regardless, these primary families joined through residence and intermarriage sometime during or after the Revolutionary War whilst living about the Virginia-North Carolina-Tennessee border region. There, separate Christian Saponi communities associated with the *Collins*, *Bowling*, and *Gibson* families had been established.

The Christian Saponi were a successor band to the historical Saponi (Sappony) nation that entered into numerous treaties with the British and the Colonial Governors of Virginia, moving together farther into the mountains following that conflict with the other Christian

¹ NAM T623 R541: Magoffin County, KY: 166-167.

² In 1900, the community was physically composed of two parts: the primary residence centered on the Big Lick "village" in Magoffin County and the greater Salyersville area, and the other 150 miles north near Carmel, Ohio, in Brush Township of Highland County.

³ See Carlson 2003: Figure 1. This initial petition submission necessarily presents Salyersville Indian Community and population (hereafter referred to as SIC or SIP), history in very broad strokes. Throughout this document, I will be referring the reader to my PhD Dissertation (2002/2003, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University) which is devoted to describing and explaining the social, cultural and political history of the Salyersville Indian population and their Christian Saponi ancestors. I will refer to that document throughout this petition in order to provide further detail, elaborations, and references regarding the questions and topics at hand. Digital copies of both the dissertation and relevant cited sources material are attached and provided with this petition submission. See Carlson (2003).

Saponi families, of which the *Collins* surname became was one of the most prominent. After losing their 1713 treaty reservation in mid-southern Virginia at Fort Christiana, the Saponi Nation split into numerous 'bands', the Christian Band first moving to Governor Spotswood's land until driven south back to North Carolina where some bought land, but abandoning that area with the onset of the Revolutionary war in which a number of *Collins* and *Gibson* men fought in the American militias, often defending settler forts along the Clinch River in the extreme western portions of North Carolina and Virginia and northeast Tennessee. After the War, the Christian Saponi removed to those locations and established the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain communities. By the early 1800s, a few of those bands' families chose to move about the neighboring hills and hollows of east Kentucky, including the large family of *Valentine Collins*, his being the most prominent to this discussion and who were now joined through intermarriage and residence with the aforementioned "Indian" *Cole* and *Gibson* families. It was these three 'progenitor' SIC families who, with a few other associated relations, eventually bought land clustered together in the mountains of east Kentucky near what is now Salyersville just prior to the Civil War. In doing so, they established a distinct Indigenous settlement, most of whose population was reported as such on the Salyersville District Indian Schedules in the 1900 and 1910 federal censuses for Magoffin County, the latter of which specifically labeled most of them as "Cherokee."⁴

While assertions made in historical records generated in the first decades of the 1900s that the Community's members were of "Cherokee," and/or "Catawba" decent remain unconfirmed and conjectural, those same documents make clear the people saw themselves to be "Indian" and comprising a distinct Indian population and community, and that they were looked upon as such by outsiders. Endogamy (marriage within the group) was the norm, homes were multi-generational, in distinctly clustered in a few specific locations, and their families were large. Furthermore, a few of their number had grown to some prominence in local county matters. Being tax-paying landowners, they had enough respect and influence to have two of their number elected to be Justices of the Peace in the early 1900s. The dire economic situation facing all people from that part of East Kentucky would initiate a new demographic dynamic to the SIC story.

In the 1920s, 30s and 40s, many of the Salyersville District Indian families took part in a decades' long trend of working as seasonal laborers on the "muckland" onion fields of Ohio and Michigan, and/or to work in the oil fields of Oklahoma where, by the 50s and 60s, many had permanently settled in small interlocking family groups in those locations. Families from all these location continued to maintain a constant and intimate social/political/economic relationship with those relations remaining in the Salyersville area, and in doing so maintained their unique and distinct sense of Indian identity and community. Community was expressed in multiple ways, from at least one or two times a week or more gathering at the handful of churches they established and maintained in Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan, churches to the emergence of large, sometimes multi-day, family gatherings in the 1960s and 70s. In the early 2000s, family leaders reorganized the community into a formal, incorporated government to

⁴ See Carlson 2003: see Chapters 1-9. For censuses, see NAM T623 R541: Magoffin County, KY: 166-167; NAM T624, R494, Magoffin County, KY: 258-259.

better serve the needs of their people, which has included pursuing federal recognition as an Indian tribe. The SIC contend they are deserving of federal acknowledgement as an Indian Community, demonstrating through continuous existence as such since before 1900, and being successors-in-interest to at least one historic tribe, the Saponi nation, that was signatory to the treaties of 1677, 1680, 1705, 1713, 1717, 1722, and 1733.⁵

b. Continued existence since 1900:

The 1900 federal census for Magoffin County, Kentucky showed clearly that there then existed a distinct Indian Community located deep in the heart of this part of Kentucky's Appalachia. The federal census Indian Population Schedule for the Salyersville District revealed most were living in a geographically distinct communal setting along the stream called Big Lick and a few other nearby watercourses.⁶ Today, descendants of these people refer to themselves as members of the Salyersville Indian Community (hereto after referred to as SIC).

This 1900 'Salyersville District Indian Population' (SIP) had established this primary 'settlement' just prior to the Civil War about eight miles east of what is now Salyersville, Kentucky.⁷ The population has maintained a distinct and continuous social and political existence since.⁸ The aforementioned 1900 census gave no indication as to the tribal identity, heritage or historic affiliation of this "Indian population", but in the following year, an article published in *The Tennessean* would state them to be "Catawba Indians."⁹ The anonymous correspondent "writing from Salyersville" stated:

"It is not generally known there are Indians scattered all over the mountains of Kentucky, but in nearly every county in the eastern section may be found the families named Cole, Perkins, Collins, Mullins or Sizemore, many in some way related to "Old Billie" Cole, a Catawba Chief, who came here from North Carolina and settled in Floyd County nearly a century ago. The biggest numbers of "Old Billies" descendants living in one place is the Cole family on Big Lick Branch, in Magoffin County. The correspondent recently visited the "Cole Nation", as it is called there, and had a long interview with "Chief Tiney". The correspondent also got a snap-shot of the Chief and some of his children.

*Their surroundings and belongings are very primitive and crude, but they seem as content with their lot as many people more comfortably situated. The best house in the settlement is the one show in the picture, which is the home of Chief Tiney and his son's family. It is a log house of two rooms, with poarch and floors of poplar planks."*¹⁰

⁵ See Carlson 2003: 42-78.

⁶ NAM T623 R541, Magoffin County, KY: 166-167. The 1900 federal census's Salyersville District Indian Schedule enumerated 83 people in "Indian" in 15 household. However, and equally number direct consanguine (blood) relatives living elsewhere in Magoffin County and immediate neighboring counties were recorded mostly as 'white' by different enumerators, so the number is low. See Carlson 2003: 323-329

⁷ Carlson 2003: Fig. 16, Map 12 Fig.17. Map 3 and Fig.

⁸ Carlson 2003: 1-40, 329-613.

⁹ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians" *The Tennessean*: 8. Whether the very specific "Catawba" tribal claim was an assertion of the people, or if it came from the local non-Indian community, was not made clear, but we likely can presume it to be the former.

¹⁰ See [a.u.] (1901) "Kentucky's Indians" *The Tennessean*, (Nashville, TN), Monday, October 7: 8. The subtitle of the article reads: "Kentucky's Indians—Plenty of them left in the Mountain Section—Old Billie Cole's Progeny—Life in Primitive and Crude surroundings but are honest and law abiding."

The writer made clear this was locally recognized as an “Indian settlement,” and local whites often referred to their main village/neighborhood at Big Lick as “The Cole Nation”, referring to the most prominent surname in the Community.¹¹

However, a few years later, those people who were descendants of the community’s *Cole* and *Gibson* families applied in-mass for claims they felt due them as “Eastern Cherokee” under the famous Guion Miller enrollment event that took place in 1906-9. So compelling was the Salyersville Indians appearance to be a viable Indian population that Miller dispatched a special agent deep into the heart of the mountains to visit Salyersville to interview people and gather further possible ‘evidence’ regarding the *Cole* and *Gibson* family claims to Cherokee ancestry.¹² Their claims were ultimately denied because no ancestor’s name from either lineage could then be found on any previous Cherokee treaty annuity rolls.¹³

It was assuredly disappointing for the Salyersville Indian Eastern Cherokee applicants to learn their petition to the U.S. Court of Claims in 1907 for rights and benefits they felt due them

¹¹ Ibid. The correspondent interviewed one of their main leaders and elders, “Chief Tiney” Cole. According to Geographer Edward Price, the settlement and its population was still being referred to as “The Cole Nation” by local non-Indians until at least the 1950 (see Price, 1950b: 287).

¹² A considerable correspondence took place between the Salyersville Indians applying for enrollment as Eastern Cherokee and the enrolling Agent Guion Miller occurred in a good faith attempt to supply the information required, which was to locate ancestors’ names on certain treaty rolls (see Carlson 2003: 340-370 and NAM M685, “Records Relating to Enrollment of the Eastern Cherokee by Guion Miller, 1908-1910”, and NAM M1104 “Report of the Special Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Guion Miller, 1906-1909”, references cited therein). The evidence was so compelling to Miller that he sent a Special Agent named Baker to Salyersville, which then sat deep in the still largely wilderness Kentucky mountains, to interview members of the community and investigate claims further (see Carlson 2003: 358-364; NAM 1104, R151: 16346, Misc. Testimonies).

¹³ Their applications were ultimately denied because the names “John Cole” and/or “Cuzzie Anderson”, “Bryce Gibson” or “Fannie Green” could not be found on any other Cherokee treaty rolls. The same would happen to those of the SIC Gibson family who also applied. It should be noted that Miller only searched for the English surnames of Cole and Anderson in searching for SIC ancestors but apparently did not following up on the SIP applicant’s claim that family surname was originally *Chenoska*. This evidence provided by Wilson Cole is compelling as *Chenoska* indeed translates to “Coal” in the Cherokee language. Wilson was living in Oklahoma when he mentioned that on his applications, and it is likely it was overlooked. See NAM M1104, R278: 35099, Wilson Cole application.

Notably [none, few] of the Christian Saponi *Collins* families applied unless they also had direct ancestors who were Cole or Gibson (which many did), despite their living in the same community and asserting an “Indian” identity, presumably because those family members at that time knew they were descendants of a different historical tribe and therefore did not apply. While also part of the community, those of the Saponi Collins family who did not have any SIC *Cole* or *Gibson* in their lineage notably did not apply to the Eastern Cherokee. The historic Saponi tribe sold their land and made treaties of peace in the colonial era with the Governor of Virginia decades before the inception of the United States and were Christianized and considered “citizen Indians” following the Revolutionary War (see Section 2, below). Most, however, could identify families of one or more of those other progenitors’ descendants in their lineage as endogamy was still an ongoing cultural feature of the community at that time, just as it had been since at least the early 1800s. The SIC Collins families who had not intermarried with the Coles and Gibsons and did not apply for Cherokee claims during that same event presumably did not do so because they knew they were not as descendants from a different historic tribe, which we knew from the historical record to be Saponi.

as “Eastern Cherokee” had been denied by BIA Special Indian Agent Guion Miller.¹⁴ Yet, despite their Eastern Cherokee Applications being reviewed and denied/rejected, those enumerated as being part of the SIP continued to assert an “Indian” identity and were recognized as such by the local non-Indian population that knew them.¹⁵ Testament to this, those same SIC families were again referred to not only as “Indian” on the 1910 federal census of Magoffin County, but were nevertheless recorded on “Salyersville District” Indian Population Schedule to be specifically “Cherokee”.¹⁶ Although their claims as Eastern Cherokee were rejected by the federal government, the 1910 census enumerator again recorded those applicants living in the Big Lick Village on a separate Salyersville District Indian Population Schedule. The census taker of this year went so far to label them as specifically “Cherokee” and even reflected a blood quantum of “3/4” Indian, ¼ white for most.¹⁷

Regardless of the ambiguity of the historic tribal heritage/ethnicity of two of the three Salyersville District Indian progenitor families, the historical record clearly shows most of these citizen Indian families preserved their identity as an Indigenous People (they used the term “Indian”) by maintaining a distinct sense of being Community continuously before and since.¹⁸ Traveling a difficult historical path through very different and changing geographic, social, and political contexts, the families identified as part of the Salyersville Indian Population in the 1900s and 1910s have upheld their Indian identity through time and space and have maintained themselves as a distinct Indian Community both before and since. Following those years, the

¹⁴ Miller did not determine or ever state they were *not* Indian—that was not his mission—only that the ancestors could not be found on any of the rolls needed to prove so. Instead, he simply wrote notes such as “looks like a half-blood”, etc. See Carlson 2003: 361; NAM 1104, R151: 16346, Misc. Testimonies).

¹⁵ One of their number, *Harrison Cole* tried enrolling in the Creek Nation in Indian Territory in 1901 (see NA RG75, LR-1901-21274, 419144, 55986). This couple had specifically moved just a few years prior to Oklahoma, thinking the government may recognize them a grant land as “Indians.” Apparently recognizing his and his children’s tribal ethnicity or heritage was composite (multi-tribal), maybe he thought their ancestors failed to mention or actually meant one of those components of that composite was Creek Indian heritage. That is, he perhaps thought their family’s oral tradition had confused historic tribal affiliation of one or more of his grandparents. Regardless *Harrison Cole* applied for enrollment with that tribe, but was denied because he could name no ancestor on the Creek nation treaty rolls. His action suggests some SIC struggled with the ambiguity of their historical tribal heritages, and I contend that the word/tribal label they were struggling for was Catawba, but without more evidence that supposition is purely plausible conjecture.

¹⁶ NAM T624, R494, Magoffin County, KY: 258-259.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, see also Carlson 2003: 418-423. The name Salyersville Indian Community itself comes, in part, from the 1900 and 1910 Federal Census in which they which were recorded as the Indian Population Schedule for the Salyersville District of Magoffin County, Kentucky. The SIC Community membership and enrollment is built upon these censuses (see below).

¹⁸ These “Cherokee” and/or “Catawba” identity claims made by or about the Cole and Gibson families in the first decade of 1900s have remained unconfirmed. The SIC are not making a claim of Cherokee identity inasmuch as they concede that no historical documentation has emerged showing their progenitor families of Cole and Gibson confirming the claim, but neither do they deny what they were learned and taught since at least 1900. That many outsiders similarly referred to them as the same is also confirmed through the historical record, regardless of the correctness of that assertion. Indeed, it seems the word had come to mean generic sense “Indian” rather than the specific tribal affiliation (See Carlson 2003:351-359, 369, 449, 582-3). However, it should be reiterated the SIC is presently *not* claiming or petitioning a history or identity as Cherokee or Catawba despite their ancestors’ assertions otherwise as reflected in the historical record or in their own oral history—that is, they are claiming no rights or claims whatsoever to those historical tribes (see below, Part IVe).

SIC themselves continued to assert an Indian identity as their families strategically accommodated their lives to adjust to the great changes the area was experiencing due to the coming of the coal, gas, and timber industries into this part of east Kentucky.

One major change was the dynamic of outmigration undertaken for economic reasons, those being to Oklahoma in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and to specific locations in Ohio and Michigan in the first half of the 20th century.¹⁹ The latter represent those who gained season employment working in the onion fields that thrived in the “mucklands” (old peat bogs) that were being newly drained and planted by large-scale commercial growers in those states in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s.²⁰ Starting in the 1910s, and more intensely throughout the 20s, 30s was joining their non-Indian kin and neighbors who were being recruited by Ohio growers to labor in their farms’ muckfields working onions when season required. These growers actively recruited both Indian and non-Indian mountaineer families from both the Salyersville and Carmel area to weed, pick, and “top” onions. During the initial decades, the SIC families traveled back and forth in large family groups between their Salyersville and Carmel area residences and the northern onion fields. Seasonal migration between the mountains and the mucklands continued, and following WW2, some had purchased homes or were otherwise permanently settling around those muckfields. The trend continued to where, by the 1950s at least half of the SIP had taken up permanent residence in the north and most had since found ways to support their families other than through work on the onion fields. They nevertheless maintained intimate ties with the “back home” population back in Kentucky. A constant back and forth between the mountains and “the muck” for social and cultural reasons persisted despite distance, and many have continued changing residences back to the Salyersville area or north with relations around the old mucklands to this day.²¹

During the 1920s, 30s and 40s, the SIC maintained identifiable geographic communities in the Big Lick area outside Salyersville and near Carmel, Ohio. This is borne out by the censuses, which showed them living in communal, geographically-distinct residential settings in those places, although now census takers took to calling them mostly “white”, although birth and death certificates, draft cards, and other vital statistic records often reflected something different.²²

The academic and popular literature generated during the mid-1900s that make mention of the Salyersville Indian population and community labeled them variously as “Magoffin County Mix Bloods”, “mestizo”, “marginal peoples”, or “Magoffin County Indians”. Those aware of the Collins and Gibson families’ connection to those of the same name and comprising the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Christian Saponi descendants remaining in Tennessee now also sometimes labeled the SIP as “Melungeon”. Regardless of label, all identified the Salyersville Indians as a distinct community population who was recognized by themselves and their neighbors as of Indian decent, albeit “mixed”.²³

¹⁹ Carlson 2003: 334-340.

²⁰ Price 1950b: 287; Carlson 2003: 448-519.

²¹ See Carlson 2003: 448-576, Figure 1-Map 1, Figure 27-Map 15, Figure 46-Map 18.

²² See Carlson 2003: 448-477, 540.

²³ See also Carlson 2003: 525-528, 531-538. The most in-depth and influential academic literature on the Salyersville Indian Community at this time was geographer Edward Price’s “The Mixed-Blood Racial Strain of

Still a poor and modest people, the SIC were mostly unaware of any of this literature being written about them as they were busy making a living, being it on the Michigan and Ohio Onion fields, on oil rigs in Oklahoma, or back in the home hollows about Salyersville, Kentucky and Carmel, Ohio. While having no formal government structure in the mid-1900s, political and social cohesiveness was achieved and maintained through informal means: churches, reunions, wakes, and other “gatherings”. Since at least the late 1800s, identifiable leaders often have been the ministers or pastors both in Kentucky and later in the muckfields areas of MI and OH.

²⁴

After WWII, most (but not all) of the SIC families ceased seasonal migration to work the Midwest onion fields, most having obtained other lower to middle class jobs in those same areas and settled their families there. Military service remained common among the Salyersville Indians, and by the 1970s, 80s, and 90s some found the means to enter trade schools or college and gain degrees in higher education, which was rare up to this point. In the meantime, the SIC population, while somewhat geographically complex, continued to be real and vibrant. As people’s economic situations improved, along with modern technologies in transportation and communication, ties between those back around Salyersville and Carmel and Oklahoma, Ohio and Michigan were even better maintained.²⁵

In the 2000s, elders and community leaders decided to organize and formally incorporate an elected government whose function and mission has been to find ways better to serve the Community and better enhance and sustain themselves as a distinct Indian Community. In 2015, an Interim Tribal Council was put together comprised of ten Salyersville Indians from Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan who immediately set to working writing a constitution and building a formal government entity. In 2020, a four-person election committee was appointed as well as a secretary, these involving members from Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and Oklahoma. In the summer of 2020, the SIC held its first general, thereby formally reorganizing their political structure with a competent, functioning Elective and General Councils, and Executive offices including Chief, Vice-Chief, Secretary, Treasury, and an enrollment department all of whose duties and responsibilities are explained and defined under a Constitution ratified by the General Council, which is comprised of all enrolled members.²⁶ The group also has since

Carmel, Ohio and Magoffin County, Kentucky,” which was published in *The Ohio Journal of Science* in 1950 (Price, 1950b). Price called them “Indian mixed-blood” and commented on one-elder woman “interplanting the corn with beans” who “claims to be three-fourths Cherokee and appears to be partially correct”, likely meaning looks like Indian (ibid: 286, Fig.7). While not elaborating on the historical tribal claim, he noted that local non-Indians still often referred to them and their primary residence centered on the Big Lick in Magoffin County as “The Cole Nation,” after the most prominent of the progenitor families. The geographer also commented on their families’ still frequent travels back and forth between the Kentucky home and the onion fields area of Michigan and Ohio. Despite his rather stereotypical and derogatory description of material and cultural life, his study made clear they were a distinct, identifiable community of people who asserted an Indian identity and were perceived as such by others who knew them”. During the course of his research, Price also made known the historical and genealogical connections between the SIP and the “Melungeons” of Eastern Tennessee and southwest Virginia (see Price 1950a; 1950b; 1951; 1953).

²⁴ See Carlson 2003: 528-531, 548-554, 567-573.

²⁵ See Carlson 2003: 528-531, 548-554, 555-558, 572-578.

²⁶ SIC Election Committee. April 8, 2025. Salyersville Indian Community Election Timeline, certified copy.

incorporated as an Indian community. Among its many activities and roles, the government's main function has been to position the Community to where it can successfully obtain recognition. But in recent years, the SIC government moved to offer different community services and activities, from occasionally providing family financial aid and initiating fundraising efforts, to providing volunteer aid in the local greater-Salyersville area non-Indian community, such as they notably did helping distribute food and clothing after the 2023 floods devastated the area.

II. Claim of historical Indian tribe

A. Description of the historical Indian tribe or historical Indian tribes that combined and functioned as a distinct social and political entity as it existed before 1900.

Note, it is important to prove more than simply an ethnic or linguistic description of a group. Historical documents describe Indian entities using various terms such as "tribes," "bands," "Pueblos," "Rancherias," "villages," or "communities." Your current group must link back to a specific Indian entity.

B. Location(s) of the historical Indian tribe prior to 1900

1. Colony/Territory/state
2. County/counties/region/other geographic area

C. Description of approx. number(s) of individuals in the historical Indian tribe at point(s) prior to 1900 and names of individuals in the historical Indian tribe claimed as ancestors of current members.

D. Brief explanation of historical (pre-1900) lists of members of the historical Indian tribe and indications of who on these lists have descendants in the current membership.

E. Provide applicable supporting evidence

1. Clear, legible Photocopy of scanned electronic copy of each piece.
2. Possible transcription and translation of supporting evidence.
3. bibliographic reference of supporting evidence

II. Claim of historical Indian tribe (2b)

IIA. Description of the historical Indian tribe or historical Indian tribes that combined and functioned as a distinct social and political entity as it existed before 1900.

A. Summary Paragraph/Description of the historical tribe. The Salyersville Indian Community (SIC) is a composite Indigenous population comprised of descendants of *Valentine Collins'* family or 'band' of Christian Saponi who were joined in residence and intermarriage with two self-asserting, and widely acknowledged by outsiders, specific "Indian" families carrying the surnames of *Cole* and *Gibson* sometime before or during the Revolutionary War while living about the VA-NC-TN border region prior to later settling in the Salyersville area of KY. These three primary families, with other relations, combined and have functioned as a distinct social unit/community population ever since. The Christian Saponi were a successor band to the historical Saponi (Sappony) nation that entered into numerous treaties with the Colony of Virginia, but after losing their reservation circa 1728, scattered into numerous bands. The Christian Band of Saponi moved first to Governor Spotswood's land until driven away from the area by disgruntled settlers, the primary families moving to NC where they were found in 1755. However, by onset of the Revolutionary war, the Christian band families moved together farther into the mountains, first along the New River corridor along the Virginia-North Carolina border in 1790, and by 1810, the Clinch Valley corridor along the Virginia-Tennessee border near Cumberland Gap. While the majority of the now numerous Christian Saponi *Collins*, *Bowlings*, *Bunch* and other families intermarried with them remained settled in the Clinch River Valley, a few of their number, including a headman named *Valentine Collins*, joined with the "Indian" families associated with heads of family *John* and *Cuzzie (Anderson) Cole*, and *Bryce*

and *Fannie (Green) Gibson*. Those families had combined both in residence and intermarriage, and these three ‘progenitors’ SIC families subsequently bought land together in the mountains of east Kentucky near what is now Salyersville, just prior to the Civil War. In doing so, they established the distinct Indigenous settlement whose population was reported on the Salyersville District Indian Schedules in the 1900 and 1910 federal censuses. In sum, the SIC story prior to 1900 is a story of resiliency, tenacity, and since that time, revitalization.

A. Detailed Description of the historical tribe.

The 1900 Federal Census enumeration of the people comprising the ‘Salyersville District Indian Population’ (hereafter referred to as SIC and/or SIP) showed clearly that there existed a distinct Indian Community deep in the heart of Kentucky’s Appalachia.²⁷ The families comprising this SIP had settled permanently in the Salyersville area in the mid-1800s. Having separated from the two primary Christian Saponi communities located in NE Tennessee and SW Virginia near the Cumberland Gap in the early 1800s, the large family of *Valentine Collins* and a few others joined with the large “Indian” families of Bryson and *Fannie (Green) Gibson*, and John and *Cuzzie (Anderson) Cole*, and this composite band of Christian Saponi and others moved about the hills of east Kentucky. Some of the Saponi *Collins* and associated families acquired land along Jenny’s Creek as early as 1831. However, the bulk of the land in which the SIP would be enumerated in 1900 Indian District was located about eight miles away, just beyond the headwaters of that waterway and near that of Middle Creek of the Big Sandy River. The formal formation of that part of that distinct “Indian settlement” was established with the communal purchase of land in the decade prior to the Civil War and centered about the neighboring watercourses and ‘hollows’ of Bear Creek, Cole Creek, and “The Big Lick”. This conspicuous community conglomeration lay in the immediate vicinity where Magoffin County now borders Johnson and Floyd in eastern Kentucky and is about eight miles from what is now Salyersville.²⁸

In 1900, these families were most prominently represented through the surnames of *Cole*, *Collins*, and *Gibson*. The most prominent of them at that time, extended family of *Cole (Chenoska)*, had long prior attached themselves through intermarriage with the Christian Saponi family of Valentine Collins who, along within other Indian families, including the Christian Saponi *Bowlings*, and “Indian” *Gibsons* who were already heavily intermarried with them had established the two aforementioned large Christian Indian communities along Clinch River following the Revolutionary War, in which some of the Saponi fought with distinction aside the Americans by protecting frontier forts and settlers in this area.²⁹

The Christian Band of Saponi was formed under the intense conditions of British colonialism and managed to persist through periods of immense social, political, and economic changes decades prior to the onset of the Revolutionary War. With the available historical record, it is with the Saponi where the earliest historical tribal component of the SIC story can be shown to begin. The Saponi signed their first treaty with British Government in 1677. In

²⁷ NAM T623 R541: Magoffin County, KY: 166-167.

²⁸ See Carlson 2003: 222-332, Figure1- Map 1.

²⁹ See Carlson 2003: 156-192, Figure 12- Map 10, Figure 15-Map 11, Figure 15b, Figure 16-Map12, Figure 17-Map13.

doing so, they became a “tributary tribe” to the Colony of Virginia, in which both acknowledged each other’s sovereign status. The most consequential treaty the Saponi would enter into was the treaty of 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation. In that treaty, the subsequent treaty of 1713 the Saponi and allied Siouan speaking tribes, including the closely related Tutelo and Occoneechi, ceded a large swaths of land in Virginia in exchange for a Reservation, which was eventually laid out in 1714 at the end of the Tuscarora War in the southern part of the colony.³⁰ The treaty also reserved usufruct (hunting, fishing, and gathering) rights on the ceded lands, and both parties agreed to provide mutual aid and protection from Iroquois warriors that harassed Virginians and Saponi alike. Governor Spotswood had a protective military fort built on the reservation, along with a mission church and school. This complex was called Fort Christianna and was complete in 1714. There, schoolmasters Reverends Charles Griffen and John Fontaine would educate and proselytize the Saponi adults and children, and those of the allied tribes who joined them living there. Those Siouan speaking tribes were now sometimes referred to as “Tributary Indians” in the historical record, because the treaties made their still independent governments ‘tributary’ to that of Virginia. During their tenure on the reservation, the Ft. Christianna braves served as a sort of border guard for the colony, and they provided guides and escorts for Virginia military, private merchants, settlers and missionaries.³¹

Under the tutelage of Rev. Griffen, many became ‘Christianized’ and received at least rudimentary western education during this period. Also, while living at Christiana, it came to be that colonists came to refer to the entire conglomeration of the tribes gathered there, the Saponi, Tutelo, and Occoneechi, and perhaps Outaponie, Kewaunee, and Sara, as all being “Saponi”, and were more often all referred to as Saponi by others. That trend would continue throughout the 1700s as their numbers shrank from war and disease, and numerous intermarriages between those shrinking tribes contributed to making their tribal heritages seemingly indistinguishable to outsiders.³²

After tension boiled over with colonial settlers and unscrupulous traders in by 1730 the Fort was abandoned by the tribe living there, and the great Saponi diaspora began. Saponi and the rest of the tribal population living there broke up, with families and bands going in different directions. Some Saponi and Tutelo moved north to Pennsylvania and New York where they were ‘adopted’ by their old adversaries, the Iroquois-speaking Cayuga, while other families and bands trended south with most eventually integrating with the largest of the Siouan language speaking tribes remaining in the east, the still numerous and powerful Catawba Nation of North and South Carolina. During this difficult period, many of the tribal names, such as Tutelo and Occoneechi, would fade from the historical record, although the people themselves largely did not. The most important component of the Saponi diaspora to Salyersville Community history is the band of “Christian Saponi”, which is a term used here to refer to that band of Saponi who alternatively moved onto Virginia Colonial Governor *Alexander Spotswood’s* land in Orange

³⁰ Carlson 2003: 55-57.

³¹ Carlson 2003: 49-55, 57-59, 63-65, Figure 5-Map 3, Figure 6-Map 4, Figure 6-Map 5. The Saponi signed treaties in 1677, 1680, 1705, 1713, 1717, 1722, 1733 and 1768 (the latter being signed by Iroquois adopted Band only)

³² Carlson 2003: 58, 63-65, 65-78. 79-90.

County, Virginia. The particular location of their village of small cabins was along the Rapidan River at a point called “Fox’s Neck”.³³

Living under the leadership of family headmen with names of *John Collins, Alex Machartion, John Bowling, Maniassa, Craft Tom, Blind Tom, Foolish Jack, Little Jack, Charles Griffen, Issac, Harry* and at least a dozen other, the Christian Band of Saponi lived in relative peace on their benefactor’s land along the Rapidan River until 1743, when they were accused of harassing and threatening local settlers and were forced to leave the area and the Christian Band of Saponi went on the move.³⁴ Christian Saponi history after removing from Spotswood’s land is still not well reflected in the historical record, in part because of frequent movement. Still, while faint, a path can be traced. They would first disperse into Louisa County, Virginia, and then, by 1755a into North Carolina just south of the old Christianna reservation where some of the headmen of Saponi Collins families obtained title to land in Orange County NC along or near the Flatt River which flows into the Eno.³⁵

(1) The Flatt River Community (1750a- 1769a) become apparent in the historical record from tithable/tax lists and other documents which show a concentration of the Christian Band Saponi *Collins* in four household head by *John, Sam, Tom Sr.* and *Tom Jr.* At least one of those lists record them as “Molata”, and show them living in residence with households head by men named *Thomas, George,* and *Charles Gibson, Mager Gibson,* and another head by a man named *Micager Bunch,* all of whom were also record as “Molata”.³⁶ It was sometime in the interim —if not before—between living in Orange County, Virginia and Orange County, North Carolina that the Saponi *Collins* and *Bolling* families came to be in close association with the “Indian” *Gibson* and *Bunch* families.³⁷ These families historical tribal affiliation prior to intermarriage with the Christian Saponi remain unknown. Also, from this point forward, a new pattern of inconsistency

³³ Carlson 2003: 90-101, 101-104, 173, Figure 8-Map 6, Figure 9-Map 7. From this time period forward those who I refer to as “The Christian Band of Saponi” emerged as a distinct social/political entity that existed simultaneous but separately from at least two other Saponi ‘bands, one that integrated with the Cayuga in New York, the other with Catawba to the south (see Carlson 2003 :93-100) The split likely occurred regarding those who were attempting to follow the path Spotswood had laid out to become Christian, “civilized”, and those who had become disgruntled with the ongoing violations of their treaties with the colony, particularly in regard to having, reserved to them the right to hunt, fish, and gather on the ceded territory that surrounded the reservation, but settlers would violently harass them if they did. (see Carlson 2003: 67, 75-78, 90-92, 101-109). This label is appropriate because records call at least one of their number, the aforementioned *Machartion*, was explicitly described “Christian Saponi” “*Macourtioon, A Christian Saponi*”. At least some of their number were now competent in English. Spotswood had invested decades of effort and personal money in educating and Christianizing the Saponi because they had proven to be staunch allies of his and Britain, and as their “Great Father” he apparently felt he had an obligation to offer some protection and a place to retreat. See VMHB V14: 224-245. Petition of Alex’r Maurchtoon’ VSA-OCOB Rolls 20-31. See also Carlson 2003: 101.

³⁴ See VSA-OCOB Roll31: 309; Grinnen 1890: 189-90; Carlson 2003: 101-193. It is from this list and the association of the name there that allow from tracking the band in the historical record from this point forward.

³⁵ Carlson 2003: 110-116

³⁶ NCSA (Raleigh, NC) file No.T.O.1005.1; Carlson 2003:120.

³⁷ See Carlson 2003:110-114, 116-130.-Thus far, I can find no historical tribal claim being asserted by the Bryce *Gibson* descendants to their 1909 “Cherokee claims”, although they and their ancestor’s prior were variously recognized as “Indian” or “mixed” since their association and intermarriages with the New River-Greasy Rock Stone Mountain Christian Saponi communities. Since that time, they have always called them, and be recognized by outsiders, as “Indian” or “Indian mixed” and considered part of the Community (see Carlson 2003).

was being set which can be seen by following these land-owning 'citizen Indian' *Collins* in historical records as "Indian" 'FPC', Molata, or Free Colored persons.

(2) The New River Indian Community. Most likely due to harsh social climate for non-whites as well as the fact the colonies were on the verge of Revolutionary War, the Flatt River Collins and associated families would move yet again, and by 1770 had relocated about 150 miles west into the New River valley where it crosses the North Carolina-Virginia border.³⁸ When the Christian Saponi community were first enumerated living here, they were noted be residing on "Indians Lands" (1773 'tithable and delinquent list'), this part of Botetourt County VA still 'unceded'. This stretch of New River was where traditional Catawba Country buttressed that of the Cherokee, and was a region where their hunters and traders frequently interacted with those of the settlers who were now also entering the area.³⁹ During the Revolutionary War [years], a number of Christian Saponi men from the newly established New River Community would fight for the Americans in local militia units as comprised of frontier settlers. During or soon after/following the Revolutionary War, the Christian Saponi families stayed consolidated and had acquired title to land long the New River mostly just across Virginia border in North Carolina.⁴⁰ The 1790 census shows most located just south of the border. These militia Revolutionary war vets and taxpaying citizen Indians, prominently represented by the large families of *Collins, Gibson, Moore, Bowling, Bunch, and Goodman* formed a distinct geographic settlement which is reflected in census and land ownership records. Most of those people living at New River Indian Community were recorded in federal census to be "free persons of color" (then including both free African Americans and citizen Indians).⁴¹ The 1800 Census reveals *Valentine Collins* is one of four Collins families on the North Carolina side, while other families extended up the valley into Grayson County, Virginia.⁴²

3) The Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Communities. After the War ended, members of the New River Community began relocating to western Virginia where they had previously served defending frontier forts along the Clinch River just north of the TN-VA border from warriors of British aligned tribes.⁴³ Although the complete transition took a number of years, censuses, tithable lists and other records show that, by the early 1800s, these citizen Indian families were again on the move, leaving their homes off the New River and first settling about Fort Blackmore at the foot of Stone Mountain in southwest Virginia where they had served protecting settlers during the War. In doing so, they founded two distinct Indian communities, one contingent settling about Stone Mountain, and a larger one thirty miles south at a place traders called "Greasy Rock", now Sneedville, Tennessee (then Hawkins, now Hancock County). They were most prominently represented by the Saponi *Collins* and *Bowling* families, the now equally numerous "Indian" *Gibsons* with whom they extensively intermarried, and a few other

³⁸ Carlson 2003: 130-131; Botetourt Co 1770; Montgomery County, VA 1789.

³⁹ Carlson 2003: 129-30, 133-135.

⁴⁰ Carlson 2003: 129-155, Figure 10-Map8, Figure 11-Map 9, Figure 12-Map 10.

⁴¹ NAM RG 29, M637, R7: 123; Carlson 2003: 144-145.

⁴² See Carlson 2003: 152-153; NAM RG29, M32, R29; Grayson County, VA 1800 Tax List.

⁴³ Carlson 2003: 156, 168-117.

associated families. Most of these families settled down and formed the core of those communities, and where they remain a distinct community population.⁴⁴

While most of the New River Christian Saponi families settled permanently at Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain, the families of *Valentine Collins*, *Meredith Collins*, and *Bryce and Archibald Gibson*, were among those who instead chose to continue a little father west, mostly about East Kentucky during the 1820s and 30s.⁴⁵ It is from these movements that Valentine Collins' band emerged as a separate entity as he and his large family separated from the groups. Sometime after 1830, *Bryson Gibson*, as well "*Jack*" *John (Jr) Cole*, previously associated with both Stone Mountain and Greasy Rock, would leave their homes in Claiborne County near Cumberland Gap and join with *Valentine Collins*' band instead preferring moving about the other side of nearby Cumberland Gap into the mountains of East Kentucky. Prior to doing so, those families came into close association with an "Indian" family carrying the surname of Cole.⁴⁶ Family testimony given in 1900 and earlier census and similar records all contend that *John (Sr)* and *Cuzzie Cole* were both originally from somewhere in North Carolina, but the same also show that they and their large extended family were, by the early 1800s, living in the Cumberland Gap area of what is now Lee County, Virginia and Claiborne County, Tennessee.⁴⁷

Although the record still remains somewhat unclear, it was during the Christian Saponi Collins family's tenure along the New River (or soon after along the Clinch valley) that these two Collins and Gibson's would begin association with the "Indian" family of *John and Cuzzie (Anderson) Cole*. The couple and their numerous descendants are frequently called "Cherokee" and/or "Catawba" in the historical record in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but connections to those historical tribes has never been verified. Both progenitors were said to be "¾ Indian" by their grandchildren and other relations during that time. The surname of John was written variously as Coal or Cole in early documents. One of their numerous descendants, *Wilson Cole*, made a statement to Special Commissioner Guion Miller in 1907 that his family's surname was or originally "*Chenoska*", although it is not apparent if Wilson understood that that word translated to coal in the Cherokee language.⁴⁸ This couple and/or their grown children apparently had some level of western education like the Christian Saponi did, although details remain unknown. Records suggest Collins' association with the Coles was when the latter were

⁴⁴ Carlson 2003: 156-168. The story of the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Communities beyond the purview of this history, as intense interaction between the Valentine Collins band and the GRIC faded after the Civil War. Regarding those retaining residence at Greasy Rock (now Sneedville, TN), the 1830 census shows a large, distinct community of 'Free Colored' spread north to TN-VA state line, with a smaller contingent remaining farther upstream at Stone Mountain (see NAM RG29, M19, R178:76-80; Carlson 2003:197-202) The descendants of the Christian band of Saponi comprising the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Indian population have since become derisively labeled "Melungeon" by outsiders by the end of that century. Again, that we know that this is the same Christian Saponi group from Flatt River and Foxes Neck is exhibited through by the residential, genealogical, and social association of certain English surnames through time as reflected in the historical record and briefly described above—specifically those of *Collins*, *Bowling*, and *Griffen*.

⁴⁵ *Valentine Collins* in Floyd County, 1820, NAM RG29 M33 R22: 3. *Bryce Gibson* still in Claiborne County, TN adjacent the Greasy Rock community in 1830. See NAM RG29 M19 R181: 121.

⁴⁶ Carlson 2003:162-168.

⁴⁷ Carlson 2003: 162-168.

⁴⁸ Carlson 2003: 163-168.; NAM M1104, R278: 35099, Wilson Cole application.

living on lands that they either owned or were granted, but were lost or pushed off of without being compensated, in the Cumberland Gap area, not far from Greasy Rock, at New River, or perhaps even earlier.⁴⁹ John and Cuzzie (Anderson) Cole are claimed to be either “Catawba” and/or “Cherokee” in records generated later that century. Intermarriage between those two tribes became commonplace in the late 1700s and early 1800s, despite being bitter enemies previous to those times. However, those assertions of connections to those historic tribes remain unconfirmed and therefore speculative⁵⁰

4) 1800-1850 East KY.⁵¹ Regardless of their still elusive previous historical tribal affiliation, *John* and *Cuzzie* eldest son, *Billy Cole*’s marriage to *Biddy Collins* had solidified the family-band relationship of the ‘Valentine Collins band’ through the cultural obligation and responsibilities that came with that bond. The same held with “the *Bryce Gibsons*” who also closely intermarried with those two families throughout the remainder of the century. Endogamy would typify these three large “families”. These interlocking families moved frequently about the hills and hollows of east Kentucky, even buying small tracts of land first at Catt’s Creek, and then a few other locations. Two of Valentine’s relations who also moved up

⁴⁹ Carlson 2003: 156-168. Marriage of their eldest son *Billy Cole* to “*Biddy*” *Obedience Collins*, daughter of *Valentine Collin* and *Dicy Gibson* was before 1805, and he would later state that she was “from VA”, referring to either the Stone Mountain or Greasy Rock Community. Carlson 2003: 228-230. See [a.u.] (1901) “Kentucky’s Indians” *The Tennessean*, (Nashville, TN), Monday, October 7: 8.

⁵⁰ Conjectural evidence does suggest Cherokee-Catawba relation with the John and Cuzzie Cole family. It is known that many Saponi integrated with the Catawba, and many Catawba integrated with Cherokee just prior and during the time John and Cuzzie appear in the historical record. Recalling that many Saponi separated from the Christian Band had integrated with the Catawba nearly a century before the US Civil War; and it is perhaps also relevant that subsequent to that time, many Catawba integrated with the Cherokee (Carlson 2003:158-162). However, the evidence is only circumstantial and conjectural and remains just a hypothesis without further historical evidence. I believe the answer to this petition’s deficiency of the Cole family’s historical tribal connection in SIC application lies in that history.

There is, however, compelling evidence that correlated with the Cherokee/Catawba claim: the above known chronology and geographic movements of the Christian Saponi in light of the above broader summary of the same; family members asserting compelling claims to “Indian land” near the Cumberland Gap during the statement made in 1907-8 (Carlson 2003: 267, 357-358,360; NAM M1104, R259:32512, July 25, 1908. Anderson Cole to Special Commissioner; NAM M1104, R151: 16346. Misc. Testimonies of Shepard Cole, Anderson Cole, and Kissiah Gibson, taken by Special Agent Baker, July 29, 1908, Salyersville, KY); the above-described surname of *Chenoska* claim made during the same 1906 ECA statements; the relative consistency of that historical tribal claim in historical record since at least 1889. See [au], “Mountain Sketches-Gathering of the Shiners”, *Louisville Courier Journal*, Sat., 20 April 1889, which describes “*Bill Cole, the aged Cherokee Indian Chief, who died on the same hill ten years before. Cole (is) the head of a tribe of half-breed and about a hundred and fifty of his people live on the ridge*” near the line of Magoffin and Floyd Counties. The author further called the “A Tribe of Indians”. However, this still all remains speculative without further, more concrete evidence. Also, there are other facets to consider. For example, I have made the point elsewhere that, by 1900, numerous people in the American southeast claimed or asserted a “Cherokee” identity, but using that assertion of Cherokee not to refer to that specific historical and contemporary tribal ethnicity, but instead used Cherokee as a blanket term for “Indian”, that is, using the terms interchangeably (see above). Also, if Cuzzie was not Cherokee, but rather Catawba, for instance, their children would have been clanless, they would have had no right in the Cherokee Nation per “blood law” before that was changed. (Carlson 2003:161).

⁵¹ Carlson 2003: 186-190, 219-220, 222- 253.

from Greasy Rock to east Kentucky, *Joshua* and *David Collins*, even acquitted title to land along Jenny's Creek in what is now Johnson County by 1830 while other relations still moved about.⁵²

5) The Salyersville Indian Community and the Big Lick and Jenny's Creek Villages.⁵³ *John* and *Cuzzie Cole's* grandson, "*Chief Tiney Cole*," son of *Billy Cole* and his wife *Biddy Collins*, and born in, recalls having moved frequently throughout East Kentucky prior to purchasing the land that would establish the Big Lick Village of the what would later be called the Salyersville District Indian Population. In a 1901 Interview, Billy stated

*"I was bred and born in Kentucky, but I don't know just where. Before I came to the Big Lick I lived at different places in Breathett, Floyd, Johnson, and Lawrence Counties. My father, "Old Billie" Cole, came from North Carolina. He was three-quarters Indian and was not allowed to vote until after the war, but I have voted ever since I was 21 years old."*⁵⁴

The historical record bears *Tiney's* statement about these movements out.⁵⁵ None of those residences remained permanent, however, until a decade prior to the Civil War, by which time members of these Christian Saponi and affiliated Indian families bought land in a communal manner and consolidated in now the great Salyersville area, the *Coles* concentrating at Big Lick, and *Collins* at Jenny's Creek, and the *Gibsons* outside Adamsville (later Salyersville).⁵⁶

Continuing to have very large families of many children and living in extended family households, the population remained settled on those lands and grew steadily there throughout the remainder of the century.⁵⁷ Throughout the 1800s and well into the 1900s,

⁵² *Joshua* and *Elizabeth (Dale) Collins* and *David and Polly Ann (Dale) Collins* lived adjoining or nearby, both shown having considerable real estate in the 1850 census (NAM RG29 M704 R110).

⁵³ Carlson 2003: 230-253.

⁵⁴ See [a.u.] (1901) "Kentucky's Indians" *The Tennessean*, (Nashville, TN), Monday, October 7: 8. Records show his father Billy Anderson Cole was born 1791 in Buncombe County, NC. See also Carlson 2003: 247-248.

⁵⁵ Carlson 2003: 247-248. For example, the 1830 Census shows families of *Valentine Collins*, *Wm (Billy) Cole*, *John Cole* living together in the then still expansive Floyd County, while *Bryce Gibson* and *John "Jack" Cole* still in Claiborne Co, TN. In 1840, the federal census shows John "Jack" Cole and his sister *Louanna Cole* living back across the county line into Lee County, VA with *Griffen Collins*, *Ely Bowling* and other familiar Christian Saponi names. Jack and his family would remain in Lee County until past 1860, while Bryce Gibson and Louanna and the rest of the Coles had made their up to Floyd County, joining Valentine Collins, Billy Cole and the others now settled there.

⁵⁶ The 1830 federal census shows the descendants of *Bryce Gibson*, *Charles Cole*, *Billy Cole*, and *Valentine Collins* residually consolidated in Floyd County, Kentucky, and it would be they and their descendants who, a half century later, would be enumerated on the 1900 census as the Salyersville District Indian Population. In 1850, however, the census enumerator labels their race as either "M" or "white", while back in 1820, the enumerated preferred "FC" (free colored). The 1830 and 40 enumerators further differed and instead listed them all as 'white'. See NAM RG29 M33 R22: 3; :n.p.n.; NAM RG29, M432, R200; NAM RG29, M19, R36: 11; NAM RG29 M704 R110. See also Carlson 2003: 248, 241-242).

⁵⁷ On the eve of the US Civil War, the primary geographic "settlement" or residential component of the Community population were clustered about the upper reaches of Jenny's Creek and about the Big Lick of Middle Creek, thus concentrating their people mostly in a relatively small region, where the counties of Magoffin, Floyd, and Johnson now come together. Throughout the latter half of the 1800s, local census takers would often classify these citizen Indians' "race" differently and inconsistently, from "Indian" to "white" to "M", "Free Colored Persons," and in a few instances, "Black." For instance, Billy Cole's brother John "Jack" Cole and his sons remained living in Lee County, Virginia, and Harlan County, Kentucky, where census enumerators called their "race" as "Indian" in 1860 and 1870. (See NAM RG29 M653 R371; n.p.n.; Ball 1992: 103). In contrast, in 1860, census enumerators in Magoffin County listed most of the families as "M", and their listing showed them mostly now

endogamy remained the norm, that is, marriage within the groups.⁵⁸ The distinct community population would remain stable here as they weathered the Civil War and the social turmoil that occurred throughout the mountains in the years following that conflict. That may have been at least in part the reason why a sizable contingent of their associated families would choose to remove from the Salyersville area and cross into Ohio where families created satellite villages after the war, creating what could be anthropologically defined as the Carmel “band” of Salyersville Indians. After the Civil War, the Ohio Band retained its separate settlement although back and forth between the communities is continuous henceforth.⁵⁹

In both Kentucky and Ohio locations, these citizen Indians paid their taxes, voted, and otherwise lived their everyday lives in relative isolation. At the turn of the century, two of their

consolidated is large thriving community population living around Big Lick and near Gullett/Hagar just east of Salyersville, with a few other scattered around the area, including those with surname of Perkins and Nichols who has married into the primary SIC families (NAM RG29 M653 R385: misc). 1870 was the first year the federal census list “Indians” as a racial category choice. The Johnson County enumerators notice the addition and classed most all of the Christian Saponi *Collins* and associated families living along Jennies Creek as “Indian” (NA RG29 M593 R477). Those county officials counterpart over the border in Magoffin County would, however, classed as few as “white”, but most of them living at the Big Lick and elsewhere as “M” in 1870 and 1880, while the branch of those families who has since moved up to Carmel, Ohio, were classed the same (NAM RG29 M593 R484; NAM RG29 M593 R1222; NAM RG29 T9 R431). Those living in Floyd County, however, were all list as “white” in those decades (NAM RG29 t9 R4130413; NAM RG29 M653 R 367) For more discussion and analysis of these census, see Carlson 2003: 262-265, 282-287).

⁵⁸ There does also exist about a half-dozen extended families who have lived in proximity and various levels of association with the SIC families who are also claimed to be of Indian heritage/ancestry and are variously described in 1800s records as “FPC”, “M”, etc., that being the *Perkins*, *Nichols*, *Fletcher*, and *Dale* families. All of which had also come up to the Salyersville area from the New River and Greasy Rock/Stone Mountain neighborhoods during the same time period as the primary SIC families, and a handful of early marriages between some from these families to the relevant SIC *Coles*, *Collins*, and *Gibson* caused those surnames to be prominent in the SIC population by the 1900s. Although some of progenitors of those are said to have been racially “Indian mixed”, the historical record does not yet satisfactorily prove out that assertion because most available records are too ambiguous to substantiate that claim. The SIC have not included these families in their contemporary rolls as ‘progenitor family’, qualifying their descendants for enrollment with the SIC because the “Indian” identity claim cannot yet be satisfactorily demonstrated through the primary documentation available from the known historical record. That is, further evidence is required to substantiate the claim to their Indian heritage, let alone tie to historical tribal entity. Other regional families local known or said to be racially “mixed-Indian” include the *Hales*, *Moores* and *Sizemores*, but they were not significantly affiliated with SIC families as illustrated through lack of intermarriage, shared residences, and other social indicators. At the same time, there were also other *Bowling* and *Collins* descendants in this part of east Kentucky also direct descendants from the old Christian Saponi band families, but who chose not to live or marry among the SIP after 1850 and therefore are not currently eligible for enrollment in the SI Community. For further analysis and discussion of these associated and other families and their place in SIC history, see Carlson 2000: 159, misc.

⁵⁹ See Carlson 2003:288-290 and Price 1950b: 287-288. The initial contingent of SIC families that established residence near Carmel, Ohio, were most prominently represented by “the *Gibsons*” and *Perkins*, although *Cole* and *Collins* presentation would increase soon thereafter. Also shown living in conjunction with this migrant group in Brush Creek Township were additional families carrying the surnames *Matthews*, *Nickles* and *Phillips* who had also come up from Morgan County, just east Magoffin County, with them, and who are similarly shown as “M” on census records (see Carlson: 289-290; NAM RG29 M653 R388). If that represented an “Indian” “African” or other ‘non-white’ lineage is still ambiguous. Similarly, there was also a portion of the large *Nichols* families living throughout Magoffin who are mostly cast as “white” in historical records of the period—unless they had intermarried with one of the established SIC families—but who are sometimes also said have ‘non-white’ ancestry.

number, brothers *Wallace* and *Shepard Cole*, (grandsons of *John* and *Cuzzie Cole* and (nephews of “Chief Billy”), had even been voted Justices of the Peace of the majority white districts they lived in.⁶⁰ In the meantime, the Salyersville Indians were mostly ignored by the US and Kentucky Commonwealth governments in the latter half of the 1800s.⁶¹ Still, all showed most lived in a distinct residential community. The 1890 census records were infamously lost to fire in Washington DC before being completed, but their population was mentioned in the Department of the Interior’s “Special Indian Schedules for 1890,” published in 1894, that summarized those census findings and identified those in Kentucky as being “*Civilized (Self-Supporting) Indians*” and suggesting that during the compiling of the recent federal censuses they were “*mostly enumerated as of the races which they most resembled.*”⁶²

B. Location(s) of the historical Indian tribe prior to 1900

1. Colony/Territory/state

⁶⁰ See Carlson: 311-312, 320-321, 444-445. Also, in the decade prior to 1900, and in that following, a small but significant number of SIC would move to Oklahoma Indian Territory in family groups, mostly for economic reasons. Some returned soon thereafter, but others did not and today their descendants comprise the Oklahoma contingent of SIC (See Carlson 2003:334-340).

⁶¹ The is one newspaper article that mention that “the State made special provisions for educating them, building a separate schoolhouse and employing a teacher who is not very choice in his selection of his company.” As of yet, research has not been undertaken by this researcher to find documents confirming that assertion (see Carlson 2003: 316-317).

⁶² See U.S. Department of the Interior (1894: 328, 499, 594); Carlson 2003: 314-316. The same document also revealed the SIC family connections to the old Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Christian Saponi settlement populations in NE TN and SW VA which they also identified as “Civilized (Self-Supporting) Indian”, although that document called them “Melungeon” rather than Saponi, a label derogatorily applied to them by some in regional white populations. Mention of this connection may have been a result of a few particularly influential publications that emerged from 1889 to 1891 (see Carlson 2003: 315-317, 371-407). Therein, outside academics and other observers who were characterizing the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Community descendants of the Christian Band of Saponi as ‘Melungeon’, and many put forth unfounded and often outlandish origin stories and claims, most of which concluded they were tri-racial mixed (i.e. white-black-Indian). Those who learned of the historical association of the Saponi *Collins* and “Indian” *Gibson* families spread between those various locations came to attach the same label to the SIP later in the 1900s, and trend that grew throughout the 1900s popular and academic literature. The first known recorded use of the term being applied the Christian Saponi population was in the minutes of the Stoney Creek Baptist Church located at the foot of Stone Mountain, which in the fall of 1813 some were being referred to “Melungins” by fellow congregants which also include whites and black (see KPL-PR, 145890:37). According to the 1828 and 1833 Webster’s Dictionary defines “Malen’gine, a.[Fr. Malengin]” as meaning “Guile; deceit”, but the word was “[not in use]” as it was an Elizabethan English word. With this definition in mind, I therefore interpret the Stoney Creek congregants’ use of that the word as it was employed in those church minutes as referring to some of them as religious “backsliders.” Other entries make clear that a number of the Saponi families had a falling out with church elders over matters of drunkenness, etc., so this definition is consistent with its use in the context. (see *Ibid*; also, Carlson 2003: 194-196). The old Elizabethan word, however, even then had fallen out of popular use except in isolated pockets of the US. In regard to the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Indian population, the label variously spelt but mostly as “Melungeon,” had come to be understood to mean ‘mixed’, assuming the word grew from the French “mélange.” Regardless, an even cursory reading of the literature that emerged at the turn of the century referring to them as “Melungeon” makes clear those families considered the label as pejorative and did not use it to identify themselves. Instead, even though it is the consistent claim of other people as evident in their own literature, the conjectural histories and speculations served to segregate “Melungeon” identity from “Indian” Identity. See Carlson (2003: 371-407); Everett (1999).

2. County/counties/region/other geographic area

C. Descriptions of approx number(s)...

For the purposes of this petition, Saponi history begins with the Treaty of 1677, which formally established that Indian nation's relationship with the colonial government of Virginia. The subsequent abandonment in 1728 of the Fort Christiana reservation, school, and mission, established under the Treaty of 1713 made with the same colonial government, would precipitate the great Saponi diaspora from which the Christian Saponi band emerges as a distinct entity from the other reservation expatriates. Because of their continued friendly disposition toward the colonists and their government, the Governor of that colony allowed the band of Christian Saponi Indians to resettle on his large estate in Orange County, Virginia along the Rapidan River at a place called Fox's Neck. Because it is from the recorded names of individual Saponi associated with this band while at this location-- *Collins* and *Bowling*, *Griffen* in particular--that allow for ascertaining the SIC connection to this historic band of Saponi and the Saponi Nation of the prior treaties, so it is from this point in time we follow the relevant family groups' movements forward to 1900, which occurs in roughly four broad movements and are more detail about and are briefly summarized below.⁶³

1. Spotswood's Land/ Fox's Neck Settlement Period, 1730a-1743a

Orange County, Virginia (British colony), *Rapidan River, Fox's Neck*

The historical records gathered thus far from 1743 to 1752 are murky as to the location of those Saponi with identifiable, traceable surnames, but nevertheless show movement in and about Louisa County, Virginia, during these years. The tribe hopes to address this deficiency with further research in the near future.

[] See Carlson 2003: 100-111, 112-113, Figure 5-Map 3, Figure 6-Map 4, Figure 6-Map 5, Figure 8-Map 6, for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population, and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

2. The Flatt River Community Period, 1755a -1769a

Orange County, North Carolina (British Colony), *Flatt River, Eno River*

Being expelled from Fox's Neck, ultimately resulted in some of the families moving south into North Carolina, south of old Ft. Christianna where some of the core Saponi Collins families bought land in Orange County, NC, alongside *Gibson* and *Bunch* families. This cluster of families I denote as the Flatt River Community. After some years, the families removed again to the western part of the State along New River. It does appear there is a temporary split of these families past the late 1750s until 1771. However, the historical records gathered thus far from 1755 to early 1770s are murky as to the location of those Saponi *Collins* and associated families during this period. The tribe hopes to address this deficiency with further research in the near future. It is notable that a number of head of families with the surnames *Bunch* and *Gibson* would be shown living back in Louisa County apparently not far from the old Governor Spotswood's land during these years, and living in association with a number of *Branham* families and some of whose descendants today comprise the Monacan Indian Nation who are

⁶³ See also the following maps in Carlson 2003: 129-155, Figure 5-Map 3, Figure 6-Map 4, Figure 6-Map 5, Figure 8-Map 6, Figure 9-Map 7, Figure 10-Map 8, Figure 11-Map 9, Figure 12-Map 10, Figure 15-Map 11, Figure 15b, Figure 16-Map 12, Figure 17-Map 13, Fig 19a.

headquartered in this same area to this day. Still, if and what relation the SIC progenitor family of *Bryce Gibson* has with this contingent of the same family remains unknown

[] See Carlson (2003: 118-131, Figure 9-Map 7, Fig 9b) for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

3. The New River Community, (before) 1771a-1820

Ashe County (1810) and Wilkes County, North Carolina, *New River*, *Peach Bottom* also, Botetourt County (1771), Virginia, *New River*

Located in what was traditional Catawba Country where their hunting and trading partners interacted with settlers, numerous Christian Saponi *Collins* and associated families of *Gibson*, Bolen (*Bowling*), and others acquired title to parcels of land in the New River valley along the Virginia, North Carolina boarder and their home spread into both states. In the 1800s and 1810s, the New River Community dissipated as the Saponi Collins, and associated families removed again as a group of interlocking families relocated to specific points farther west to the Clinch River Valley following the Revolutionary War. By 1820, there were only a few Saponi Collins families left in the New River valley, and they too would soon follow their kin to the Clinch Valley.

[] See (Carlson 2003: 133-155, 178-182. Figure 9-Map 7, Figure 10-Map8, Figure 11-Map 9, Figure 12-Map 10), for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

4. The Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Communities, 1790a-1830+ (present)

**Hancock County, Tennessee, *Newman's Ridge*, *Mulberry Creek*, *Clinch River*
Wise County, Virginia; Russell County, Virginia, *Stone Mountain*, *Stoney Creek*, *Clinch River***

The Christian Saponi settlements located along the Clinch River along the Tennessee and Virginia borders were established and stabilized following the Revolutionary War, and many of their descendants remain there today. It is from these communities *Valentine Collins* and a few other Saponi *Collins* and *Bowlings*, as well as a few of the prolific "Indian" family of *Gibson* who had for generations now intermarried with them, instead left and eventually established residence further west in the adjacent east Kentucky hills.

[] See Carlson (2003: 162-177, 182-185, 192-221, 225-229, Figure 11-Map 9, Figure 12-Map 10, Figure 17-Map 13, Fig 19). for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

5. Cumberland Gap to East Kentucky and, 1820a-1850

**Floyd County, KY, *Jenny's Creek*, *Middle Creek*, *Big Lick*, *Bear Branch*,
Lee and Claiborne Counties, Virginia, *Powell River*, *Cumberland Gap***

In the early decades of the 1800s, censuses and other lists show *Valentine* and other *Collins* Saponi heads of family were fluid as exhibited by their frequent movements within the general region where KY, TN, and VA join. *Valentine Collins* in particular joined with the "Indian" families of *Bryce Gibson* and the numerous and prolific *Coles* in KY moving in and about east Kentucky, NW Tennessee, and southeast Virginia for some years until settling down and buying land in the 1830s, 40s and 50s in and around the headwater of Jenny's and Middle Creeks in what was then part of the expansive Floyd County jurisdiction, and since 1860 sits where today Magoffin, Johnson, and Floyd Counties meet.

[] See Carlson (2003: 185-190, 222-225, 230-261, Figure 11-Map 9, Figure 12-Map 10, Figure 12b, Figure 15-Map11, Figure 15b, Figure 16-Map 12, Figure 17-Map 13, Fig 19a) for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population, and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

5a.- Salyersville Indian Community and the Big Lick Settlement, 1850-1900+.

Magoffin County, Kentucky, *Big Lick of Middle Creek, Gullett/Gifford*

Floyd County, Kentucky, *Cole Creek and Bear Branch of Middle Creek*

Johnson County, *Jenny's Creek*

In the early 1850, the "Indian" *Cole* families purchased a number of adjoin tracts of land centered along the watercourses of Big Lick, Cole Creek, and Bear Branch of Middle Creek at what would become the border of Magoffin and Floyd County, Kentucky, after the former county was created in 1860. This settlement would become the geographic center of what was recorded to be the Salyersville District Indian Population later recorded in the 1900 and 1910 federal censuses. Clustered family residences also sat nearby on Jenny's Creek, about five Miles north in Johnson, while other families located nearer Adamsville, later renamed Salyersville, which was about five miles west. The Jenny's Creek neighborhood SIC families would, however, largely fade from that location as those predominately *Collins* and related *Dale* families mostly moved to Missouri and other points west sometime after 1870, while at the same time the nearby Big Lick area residences grew in number.

[] See Carlson (2003: 262, 288-332, Figure 11-Map 9, Figure 12-Map 10, Figure 12b, Figure 15-Map11, Figure 15b, Figure 16-Map 12, Figure 17-Map 13, Fig 19a; Map 14) for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population, and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

5b- Carmel Indian Community, 1865a-1900+

Highland County, Ohio, *Brush Creek Township*

During or just after the Civil War, a few of the SIC "Indian" *Gibson* families would remove to a point near Carmel, Ohio, where a sister community was established. A constant back and forth of individual and entire families, including some from the related *Collins*, *Cole*, and other associated families, would continue move between the two distinct Indian community settlements up to and since 1900.

[] See Carlson (2003: 288-290, 292, misc., Figure 17-Map 13) for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

5c: Oklahoma Contingent, 1890a-1900+

Cherokee, Osage and Muskogee Counties, Oklahoma

A significant family contingent of the Salyersville Indian Community relocated to Oklahoma prior to 1900 looking for work and to claim to land as "Indians". Some would return within a few years, while some others would remain permanently.

[] See Carlson 2003: 333-340, Figure19a) for more detailed descriptive and statistical analysis of the of censuses and other historical lists which relate to demonstrating the place and number of the Community population and allow for ascertaining descendants of those enrolled as current SIC members in this place and period.

D. Brief explanation of historical (pre-1900) lists of members of the historical Indian tribe and indications of who on these lists have descendants in the current membership.

The historical record that is available regarding the earliest years of the Christian Saponi Band is still sorely incomplete. The primary starting document that lists name and numbers of this historical Indian band is the 1743 list, which names a number of the approximately 150(?) Saponi living there, including *John Collins*, *Alex Machartion*, *John Bowling*, *Maniassa*, *Craft Tom*, *Blind Tom*, *Foolish Jack*, *Little Jack*, *Charles Griffen*, *Issac*, *Harry* and at least a dozen other.⁶⁴ Best evidence traces one of the primary “progenitor” or “founding” members of the SIC from whom enrollment in the community is required for current membership, namely descendants of *Valentine Collins* and *Shepherd Collins* who are interpreted to be descendants of the above. After the band left Governor Spotswood’s land in that year, the researcher must rely on various tax lists, censuses, and other disparate documents to follow descendants through time and space. Because there is no clear enrollment type list, the tribe must make deductions from those disperse kinds of primary source documents based on showings of names and residential association as reflected in ‘household’ enumerations in order to deduce or infer the Community’s population size. Federal and other censuses, local tithable and taxes lists, vital statics records, and other miscellaneous records that the researcher must rely on to are all subject to the whims, prejudices, and prerogatives of those writers, compilers, and enumerators. Such records are therefore often inconsistent in how they identified the “race” of the Salyersville Indian Population before 1900. However, such records can and do consistently show geographic settlements made up of interlocking families comprising a distinct physical community.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ See VSA-OCOB Roll31: 309; Grinnen 1890: 189-90; Carlson 2003: 101-193. It is from this list and the association of the name there that allow from tracking the band in the historical record from this point forward.

⁶⁵See also Carlson 2003: 615-625, “Bibliographic essay” for a more thorough explanation of the source material accessed and used for each chapter, and which identifies the strength and weakness of said sources.

III. Optional: Claim of previous Federal acknowledgment (§ 83.12).

- A. n/a Explanation of how Federal Government previously acknowledged the petitioner.
 - B. n/a previous Federal acknowledgment includes but is not limited to:
 - 1. Treaty relations with US (includes treaty negotiations for unratified treaties)
 - 2. Denomination as an Indian tribe by act of Congress or executive order
 - 3. Federal government treatment as having collective rights in tribal lands or funds.
 - 4. n/a federal reservation of land...
 - C. Description of documentary evidence to show that current group is same group or evolved out of the Indian tribe that the Federal Government previously acknowledged.
 - D. Provide supporting evidence...
-

The federal government has not previously acknowledged the Salyersville Indian population as an independent, sovereign entity insofar as the federal government has not negotiated or ratified and treaties with the SIC or any of the currently known historical tribes from which their members descend. While the SIC contend they are successor-in-interests to the Christian band of Saponi whose leaders signed treaties with the Great Britain and the Colony of Virginia, neither the federal government nor Commonwealth of Virginia have acknowledged or continued the colony's treaty obligations and that bands' interest enshrined in those treaties.⁶⁶ However, there have been moments through time wherein the federal government has inadvertently acknowledged descendants of the petitioning groups as being a distinct "Indian" people. These include, for example, various instances and occasions such as the 1) 1890 Special Indian Census, 2) the Federal Census Indian Schedule of 1900 and 1910, 3) Salyersville Indians from the Carmel Community receiving Federal Assistance as "Indians"⁶⁷ In 2017, the SIC voted on and adopted a constitution which created an enrollment department which has compiled and since maintained a formal membership list.

There are no claims of previous federal acknowledgment being made by the SIC as an independent entity, nor have their members ever sought federal recognition as any other incorporated or formally organized political body. As noted above, the SIC *Cole* and *Gibson* families descendants did mobilize to be acknowledged as 'Eastern Cherokee' when they applied to make claims for land loss and unpaid annuities due them under that status, during the 1906-

⁶⁶ The federal government has since validated and acknowledged other contemporary tribes and bands to those colonial treaties, such as the Monacan Indian Nation of Virginia. There is also some conjectural evidence which suggests one or more of the SIC's four progenitor families were somehow associated with those Catawba who negotiated a treaty which would trade land from a reservation in North Carolina but was ultimately unratified and copies have currently remained lost (**Brown 1966: _**; **Merrell 1985: _**). It is hoped a more focused search for primary documents relevant to the negotiations of this treaty will be undertaken by the tribe's researcher in near future.

⁶⁷ [1] See U.S. Department of the Interior (1894: 328, 499, 594), [2] NAM T623 R541: Magoffin County, KY: 166-167, and NAM T624, R494, Magoffin County, KY: 258-259 [3] **ref....**

7 Guion Miller Enrollment event, but their claims were denied as none of their ancestors' names could be found on the relevant Cherokee annuity or treaty rolls that would have qualified them for that status.⁶⁸ The SIC have since made no formal claim, and are not here making any claim, to Cherokee identity or status.

⁶⁸ The BIA would expend time and money in order to send a special agent to investigate those Salyersville Indian families' claims in person as the group's claims were so compelling, and that agent conducted several interviews. His notes reflected only his opinion that they "look like/shows...Indian" (see Carlson 2003: 361; NAM M1104, R259:32512, July 25, 1908. Anderson Cole to Special Commissioner; NAM M1104, R151: 16346. Misc. Testimonies of Shepard Cole, Anderson Cole, and Kissiah Gibson, taken by Special Agent Baker, July 29, 1908, Salyersville, KY). The few SIC Christian Saponi *Collins* descendants who did not have *Cole* or *Gibson* ancestry notably did not apply for Cherokee claims as those families did, presumably because they knew their Indian ancestry was other than Eastern Cherokee.

IV. Seven Mandatory Criteria –*thorough explanation of how cited supporting evidence applies to criteria*

A. Criterion 83.11(a) – Identification of Indian entity

1. Introduction – Provide a brief overview of how the petitioner meets criterion 83.11(a) from 1900 to present.

the petitioner or its ancestral **group, not individuals**, must be identified as an Indian entity; external and self-identifications must be of the group as it existed contemporary to the time of the identifications. These identifications must be from 1900 to present and should be no more than ten years apart.

petitioning group as an Indian entity as required by 83.11a

2. 1900 to 1909
3. 1910 to 1919
4. 1920 to 1921
5. 1930 to 1939
6. 1940 to 1949
7. 1950 to 1959
8. 1960 to 1969
9. 1970 to 1979
10. 1980 to 1989
11. 1990 to 1999
12. 2000 to 2009
13. 2010 to 2019
14. 2020 to present
15. Summary
16. Provide applicable supporting evidence...

IV.A. The Salyersville Indian Community as an Indian Entity

IV.A.1. Introduction

1. The Tribe has been identified as American Indian since at least 1900.

The historical record clearly shows that the SIC has been identified, and identifies itself, as a distinct group of American Indians since before the federal census of 1900 which showed them to be a distinct Indian Community enumerated therein as the “Salyersville District Indian Population.”⁶⁹ Ever since purchasing the land that would become the geographic core of the SIC, which occurred just prior to the Civil War, the SIP had lived in close geographic association, just as they had done prior to that time elsewhere (see #5). For most of the remainder of the 1800s, the SIC community was focused on two primary “settlements” or residential community concentrations located on land purchases along the Big Lick in Magoffin County and nearby adjacent water steams: namely Cole Creek, Bear Branch, and Jenny’s Creek. A few pockets of SIC families also peppered Magoffin County, most notably in the Gullett-Gifford and Mason Creek areas. The second was the satellite community located the town of Carmel in Highland County, Ohio, just after the Civil War, and the movement of people between them has

⁶⁹ NAM T623 R541: Magoffin County, KY: 166-167. They were identified as “Civilized (Self-Supporting) Indians” in the 1890 Special Indian Schedule generated by the Department of the Interior in 1894. See U.S. Department of the Interior (1894: 328, 499, 594) and Carlson 2003:313-317.

remained constant and frequent ever since.⁷⁰ Such was the situation when the US Federal Census for 1900 and 1910 recorded them on aforementioned Salyersville District Indian Population Schedules. In the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, many other SIC traveled to Ohio and Michigan for seasonal work on the booming “muckfields” picking and weeding onion for corporate growers, returning to the Salyersville or Carmel communities during the off-seasons. Eventually, many of these families resettled permanently about these old onion growing locations in those states.⁷¹ This has resulted in there being today different geographic “bands” or regional concentrations of SIC families that nevertheless have maintained intimate relations with the “home 40” community around Salyersville, some of who retain title to the same land along the Big Lick where the Salyersville Indian Population District shown in the 1900s settlements was first established in the 1850s.⁷²

While the geographic expanse of the SIC community is more dispersed than during the early part of the 1900s, modern technologies such as the car, the telephone in the mid and late 1900s, and the digital age of today, have brought the scattered family bands together even more strongly. Furthermore, the primary “villages” associated with the nearby non-Indian towns of Salyersville and Carmel remained as recognized “home bands” by those living the aforementioned places. In sum, the historical record clearly shows that the SIC has been identified, and identifies itself, as a distinct group of American Indians since before the federal census of 1900 which identified them as “Salyersville District Indian Population.”⁷³ Below is a brief decade by decade summary of how the historical record and other sources demonstrate that the SIC to be a distinct community population, with a mention of just a few of the source evidences supporting that assertion. Please refer to Carlson (2003) for a much more extensive compilation of source evidences and analysis, and discussion thereof.

[] 1900s: Besides the 1900 federal census, numerous other internally and externally generated documentary sources also identify them to be an Indian Community population in that decade.⁷⁴ Geographically, in 1900/1901 the mile-long Big Lick creek watercourse was the residential and social center of the Salyersville Indian Community. At this time there did also exist a sister, spin-off settlement which was established by direct relations of the families after the Civil War near the town of Carmel in southern Ohio, as well as a sizeable contingent of SIP

⁷⁰ Although the geographic split of the Carmel Community from the Salyersville Community occurred nearly 40 years prior to the 1900s, they are nevertheless: 1) are comprised of the same families and shared the same history prior to the split and, 2) have had a continuous interchange back-and-forth of families and individuals between the two locations. Therefore, it makes sense to combine in the modern government that is now called SIC. (Price 1950b:284-5, 290; Carlson 2003.)

⁷¹ Similarly, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, economic and other reasons forced some of the SIC families to move to Oklahoma in small family groups. In some cases, families and individuals worked in both in Oklahoma and Midwest muckfields during the first half of the 1900s. See Carlson 2003: 451-460, 525-526.

⁷² Carlson Archives: Steve Bailey notes.

⁷³ NAM T623 R541: Magoffin County, KY: 166-167. They were identified as “Civilized (Self-Supporting) Indians” in the 1890 Special Indian Schedule generated by the See U.S. Department of the Interior (1894: 328, 499, 594); Carlson 2003: 313-317.

⁷⁴ See [a.u.] (1901) “Kentucky’s Indians”, *The Tennessean*, (Nashville, TN), Monday, October 7: 8; Carlson 2003: 323-370.

who had recently migrated to Oklahoma in search of work and land.⁷⁵

It was during this decade that one newspaper correspondent visited the community and after interviewing “Chief Tiney” Cole called him a “Catawba Indian”.⁷⁶ Yet, it was at the end of this decade the community members applied for claim as Eastern Cherokee during the Guion Miller enrollment event, but their claims were denied. It should be reiterated here that Guion Miller, the BIA officer in charge of the 1909 Eastern Cherokee enrollment, did not ever state that the Salyersville Indians were not “Indian,” for that matter, even that they were not “Cherokee,” but instead simply that their names and those of their relevant ancestors could not be found on any of the pertinent treaty rolls that would make them eligible for the Cherokee annuity payment. Yet so compelling was the evidence of an Indian decent and asserted identity that Miller spend money from his limited budget to send a special Agent to Salyersville investigate further. Unfortunately, the agent did little to report about those he interviewed than that they “looked/showed...Indian.”⁷⁷ No additional helpful evidence was ascertained by the special agent, and the Salyersville Indian Eastern Cherokee claims were rejected.⁷⁸ Despite being rejected in the Cherokee claim, their families’ communal participation in the event itself confirmed this was a distinct community of people who asserted an Indian identity, and that it was recognized as such by the local non-Indian population that knew and lived around them.⁷⁹

[] 1910s: Once again, the federal census for 1910 for Magoffin County, Kentucky, showed a distinct geographic Indian community which was separately enumerated on the Salyersville

⁷⁵ *Wilson Cole* was among a caravan of 35 Magoffin County families, most of whom were non-Indian, that moved to Oklahoma in 1901. Similarly, a handful of other SIC associated families had moved in similar caravans composed of mostly non-Indian families in the decade[s] prior (see Carlson 2003:334-340, 525-526)

⁷⁶ See [a.u.] (1901) “Kentucky’s Indians”, *The Tennessean*, (Nashville, TN), Monday, October 7: 8; Carlson 2003: 323-370.

⁷⁷ Carlson 2003: 333, 340-370; NAM M1104, R151: 16346. Misc. Testimonies of Shepard Cole, Anderson Cole, and Kissiah Gibson, taken by Special Agent Baker, July 29, 1908, Salyersville, KY). A considerable correspondence was made between members of the SIC and the Agent Miller’s office during the 1906-9 Eastern Cherokee enrollment event. His office would receive over 50 applications from adults int the group that, from residence evidence alone, clearly identified a large, distinct community population regardless of the then unascertained validity of their Cherokee claims. While the compelling SIC *Cole* or *Gibson* family “Cherokee” claims have never been proven, the records generated by that historical event nonetheless make clear that they identified themselves as “Indian”, they were similarly identified by those local non-Indians who knew them, and that they maintained themselves as an identifiable, distinct community of people (Ibid).

⁷⁸ Ibid. Apparently, neither Baker nor Miller’s small staff ever looked for the name *Chenoska*, which was reported on *Wilson Cole*’s ECA. Wilson and his SIC family had moved to Oklahoma a few years prior and applied for enrollment [first] as Eastern Cherokee when that event came up in 1906, and [after being rejected] tried to enroll as a Creek in 1901. During the former occasion, Wilson wrote on his application that the original name of *John Cole* who married *Cuzzie Cole* and who was the elder progenitor of that SIC family, was *Chenoska*. *Chenoska* means “Coal” in the Cherokee language and refers to that geological substance. It does not appear Guion Miller, or his staff searched for that name in the relevant treaty lists, but subsequent cursory efforts by SIC researchers have nonetheless so far failed to find any such name on those lists. How and where Wilson learned this information and why it wasn’t shared by the rest of the Community at that time remains unknown and therefore leaves the claim open to question and debate until further data emerges.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Notably, most of the local Saponi *Collins* family members who were not also descended from the SIC *Cole* or *Gibson* families did not apply for claims as Eastern Cherokee.

District Indian Population Schedule.⁸⁰ Curiously, despite having been denied their “Cherokee” claims the year prior, the schedule not only listed them as “Indian”, but also went so far as to specifically label them “Cherokee” as well as list blood-quantum, most of whom were shown to be “3/4 Indian.”⁸¹

The 1910s was also the start of a decades-long trend of the Salyersville Indians doing seasonal work “up north” in the expansive Scioto marsh Onion fields in Ohio. The family would travel back and forth in large multi-family groups to work during the weeding, picking, and topping seasons, and returning to Magoffin County when not attending to those tasks. It should be noted that the SIC undertook these journeys and work on their fields with even greater numbers of poor white families from the greater Salyersville area, and all would live in shacks and cabins provided by growers, although some would stay in tents at the edges of the fields.⁸²

[] 1920s: In contrast to the preceding two decades, the Magoffin County enumerated those they had previously identified as “Indian” as “white.” Other vital statistics records and other contemporary primary documents and secondary sources however varied in their “racial/ethnic” descriptions of those previously labeled “Indian” on 1900-1910 Salyersville District Indian Schedules.⁸³ The same held for those SIP families living at the Carmel community as well as those in Oklahoma. Despite this change in racial identification, the relevant federal censuses nonetheless again clearly show still identifiable, distinct residential communities based about the Big Lick area near Salyersville, and in Brush Creek Township near Carmel, Ohio. In the meantime, other sources show that the SIC families maintained and asserted an “Indian” identity, nevertheless. Dozens of SIC families would continue to seasonally work in the onion fields in Hardin County, Ohio, returning to their homes around Salyersville or Carmel in the off-season throughout the 1920s. Alternatively, another small but significant number of SIC families would continue on in Mingo County, West Virginia, having attained work in the coal mines at the town of Thacker.⁸⁴

[] 1930s: The 1930s witnessed the heyday of Salyersville Indian seasonally working the muckfields of Ohio and Michigan. Records generated from this period are, of course, subject to the biases and perceptions of the writer’s ideas of the same as they are in any period, but most popular and academic mention of the Salyersville Indian population show their persistence as a distinct community population and, inadvertently yet consistently confirming the SIP’s ongoing claim to and assertion of an Indian identity. By the end of the decade, there was more permanent out-migration occurring for the major communities about Salyersville and Carmel, primarily due to their limited land base, and local job markets could not support all of their large families. While the Oklahoma migrations had mostly stopped, movement to Ohio, and after the volatile Scioto Marsh onion fields strikes of early 1930s, into Michigan where many growers moved their Onion operations not only continued, but some families were now taking

⁸⁰ NAM T624, R494, Magoffin County, KY: 258-259; See also Carlson 2003: 418-423.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Carlson: 2003: 423-425, 426-427, 428-461.

⁸³ Claims made by both relatives and others on vital statistic records often reflect “Indian” or “copper”.

⁸⁴ Carlson 2003:461-484.

up permanent residences about those fields⁸⁵

It should be mentioned here that endogamy, that is marriage within the group, remained the norm up until the 1920s, but the dynamic began to lessen during onion field years when there began more considerable intermarriage with other “Kentuck”/White mountaineer families”. Endogamy, however, did continue to a significant degree until past the 1950s, where it has persisted until today, but only to a very limited extent. At the same time, there has since been a marked increase of Salyersville Indians that have married and had children with members of other federally recognized tribes and have done so at a rate proportionally far higher than white or black Americans, and that trend has increased in the past 2-3 generations.

[1940s and 1950s: Most 20th century popular literature grossly neglects the historical record when making statements about the SIC and/or their ancestors and relations elsewhere, as do most of academic and popular literature that has been published regarding the community. Source material emanating from the period mentioning the Salyersville Indian community population has labeled them variously as “Magoffin County Indians,” “Magoffin County Mix-Bloods,” or racially-ambiguous terms such as “mestizo,” “marginal peoples,” “tri-racial isolates”, or “Carmelites.”⁸⁶ A few writers making mention of the Salyersville Indians’ Christian Saponi *Collins* and *Gibson* family connection to the old Greasy Rock Indian Community located near Sneedville, Tennessee, instead preferred to call them all “Melungeon” (see below). Yet, even while employing terms and perpetuating externally-generated myths and legends to support their speculative origin theories, all such literature still identifies the people comprising both distinct communities as being at least “part-Indian.” Furthermore, the same writers recognized them as being distinct community populations regardless of the label being imposed upon them.

⁸⁵ See Carlson 2003: 483-532.

⁸⁶ See Carlson: 2003:518-58, 31-538; A few academics have previously made brief mention of the historical/genealogical connections between the Greasy Rock (Newman Ridge) and Stone Mountain “Melungeon” Community populations with the Salyersville Indian Population, including BIA anthropologists Frank Speck and James Mooney(ref). In a manner of speaking, they concurred, in part, with those peoples’ own assertion of an Indian identity by describing their community populations as originating from “wasted tribes” and “refugee” Indian families. Later looking for “remnant groups” of “historic” tribal populations, other academics making reference to the Salyersville and Stone Mountain/Greasy Rock populations most concluded that these “eastern Indian Survivals,” while still themselves asserting an Indian identity, would soon disappear due to the forces of social and cultural assimilation. But in making that prediction, those writers also inadvertently recognized both groups as being distinct community populations at the time of their writings. The entire sparse amount of literature that makes reference to the Salyersville Indian population has emphasized an assumed insurmountable ambiguity of the people’s history. Only sometimes, more accurately, cast as “Magoffin County Indians,” they more often employ labels such as ‘mix-blood’, ‘marginal groups’ ‘racial isolates,’ ‘racial survivals’, or even ‘mestizo’ (a term employed anthropologist Brewton Berry in the 1960s as a term for all non-federally- recognized “Indian Survivals”), to describe them. Favoring to repeat disparaging myths and legend while espousing unfounded and often outlandish origin theories, their use of such labels dilute and are sometimes used to explain away the persistence of the people’s own assertion of an Indian identity (Gilbert; Berry). Interestingly, a number of other “isolate groups” mentioned in the same 20th century literature alongside the Salyersville and Greasy Rock populations have since gained federal recognition, such as the Monacan Nation of Virginia.

The most expansive and influential published academic work devoted solely to the Salyersville Indian community has been geographer Edward Price's article "The Mixed-Blood Racial Strain of Carmel, Ohio and Magoffin County, Kentucky," published in 1950. His study made clear that, at that time, the Salyersville Indians socially and geographically remained a distinct, identifiable community of people who asserted themselves to be "Indian," and were mostly accepted as such by the non-Indians who lived around them. Price cast the people's race as being mostly "Indian-white" without discounting "black" as also being part of the at least some of their families' ancestry. Price noted that local non-Indians still often referred to the community population, as well as the Big Lick watershed area itself, as "The Cole Nation," the name coming from the most common surname now found among the Community. Price's research was also most influential in making the historical and genealogical connection between those he called "The Mix Bloods of Magoffin and Carmel" and the "Melungeons" living in northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia.⁸⁷ "Melungeon" is a regional folk term that originally was exclusively applied to the *Collins*, *Gibson*, *Bowling* and the other Christian Saponi families that remained back in the old Stone Mountain and Greasy Rock communities. As with their Salyersville Indian relations, Price's studies showed the latter also comprised distinct, identifiable communities of people who asserted and were accepted by most non-Indian who lived about them as being "Indian." Notably, while some outside literature would subsequently apply the term "Melungeon" to the Salyersville Indian families in the latter decades of the 1900, the word remained unheard of by the SIC families until at least the 1980s and was not a word they applied to themselves, preferring instead "Indian."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Price 1950a, 1950b,

⁸⁸ Ibid, Carlson 2003: 371-409. Primarily a result of a few particularly influential publication that emerged from 1889 to 1891, other outside observers were derisively characterizing the Greasy Rock Indian Community who are mostly lineal descendants of the Christian Band of Saponi as 'Melungeon'. These writings often promote and perpetuate unfounded and outlandish origin stories and claims of them as instead being descendants of Phoenician sailors or settlers from the Lost Colony of Roanoke who married Indians and later moved inland to the mountains, a few even suggesting the word Melungeon as original Turkish meaning "cursed soul" (see Carlson 2003:371-409; Everett 1991). Despite the original use of the term *Melungin* being used to describe certain people lack of religious principle (see above, footnote 62), the word has come to be used as a racial/ethnic identifier. That is, outsiders instead came to understand and employ the term "Melunjin" or "Melungeon" to mean 'mixed', apparently assuming the root of the label stemmed from the French "mélange". Most literature employing the Melungeon label have been unaware of the original Elizabethan usage of the term and instead generally accepted and used to mean "mixed," but the imposed label has been employed in a manner that distracts and distorts the people's own self-asserted Indian identity. In sum, while such literature's Melungeon racial-identity "origin" theories regarding the successor communities to the Christian Band of Saponi have assumed they were either bi- or tri-racial mixed, the one constant racial component claimed in their speculations about these distinct community populations is that of "Indian." So, it is because of their historical/genealogical association with the related historical Christian Saponi bands associated with the *Collins*, *Bowling*, *Gibson* families living about Greasy Rock (Newman's Ridge) and Stone Mountain modern writers have sometimes attached the 'Melungeon' label to the SIP, a trend that has grown since the 1990s (Everett, 1999). Even still, through all that often derogatory and highly speculative body of literature focused on debating the people's racial origin and ethnic composition, the "Indian" component of their identity is nevertheless the starkly obvious and only consistent thread running through it all. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that a close reading of the same literature makes clear those Communities' members considered the Melungeon label as pejorative and did not use it to identify themselves. Today, despite the people's own claim to an Indian identity as members of an Indian community, there continues

[] 1960s-70s. Still a largely poor and modest people, the SIC were mostly unaware of any of this literature being written about them about as they were busy making a living, being it on the Michigan and Ohio Onion fields, on oil rigs in Oklahoma, or back in the home hollows about Salyersville, Kentucky and Carmel, Ohio. After WWII, most (but not all) of the SIC families ceased seasonal migration to work the Midwest onion fields, most having obtained other lower to middle class jobs in those same areas and settled their families there. While having no formal government structure in the mid-1900s, political and social cohesiveness was achieved and maintained through informal means: churches, reunions, wakes, and other “gatherings”. Since at least the late 1800s, identifiable leaders often have been the ministers or pastors both in Kentucky and later in the muckfields areas of MI and OH.⁸⁹

[] 1970s-1990s. It is also notable that there has been a considerable rate of intermarriage between SIC and members of federally recognized tribes since the mid-1900s, and it is a trend that seems to have significantly increased in recent decades. Military service remained common among the Salyersville Indians, and by the 1970s, 80s, and 90s some found the means to enter trade schools or college and gain degrees in higher education, which was rare up to this point. In the meantime, the SIC population, while somewhat geographically complex, continued to be real and vibrant. As people’s economic situations improved, along with modern technologies in transportation and communication, ties between those back around Salyersville and Carmel and Oklahoma, Ohio and Michigan were even better maintained.⁹⁰

[] 2000-present. In the 2000s, elders and community leaders decided to organize and formally incorporate an elected government whose function and mission has been to find ways better to serve the Community and better enhance and sustain themselves as a distinct Indian Community. In 2015, an Interim Tribal Council was put together comprised of ten Salyersville Indians from Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan who immediately set to working writing a constitution and building a formal government entity. In 2020, a four-person election committee was appointed as well as a Secretary, these involving members from Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and Oklahoma. In the summer of 2020, the SIC held its first general, thereby formally reorganizing their political structure with a competent, functioning Elective and General Councils, and Executive offices including Chief, Vice-Chief, Secretary, Treasury, and an enrollment department all of whose duties and responsibilities are explained and defined under a Constitution ratified by the General Council, which is comprised of all enrolled members.⁹¹ The group also has since incorporated as an Indian community. Among its many activities and roles, the government’s

to be a body of literature that instead promotes the assertions buried within various conjectural histories--speculations which have and continue to serve to segregate “Melungeon” identity from the self-asserted “Indian” Identity. (see Carlson 2003: 580-61). Regarding the Greasy Rock Community in particular, speculation and misinformation regarding so-called “Melungeon” has burgeoned with the onset of internet in the past three decades. Furthermore, there are some from the Greasy Rock community who have attempted to ‘re-appropriate’ and use the label as a positive identifier for themselves since the 1990s.

⁸⁹ See Carlson 2003: 528-531, 548-554, 567-573.

⁹⁰ See Carlson 2003: 528-531, 548-554, 555-558, 572-578.

⁹¹ SIC Election Committee. April 8, 2025. Salyersville Indian Community Election Timeline, certified copy.

main function has been to position the Community to where it can successfully obtain recognition. But in recent years, the SIC government moved to offer different community services and activities, from occasionally providing family financial aid and initiating fundraising efforts, to providing volunteer aid in the local greater-Salyersville area non-Indian community, such as they notably did helping distribute food and clothing after the 2023 floods devastated the area.

15.Summary Despite traveling a difficult historical path through very different and changing geographic and social and political context, the families identified as part of the Salyersville Indian Population in the 1900 and 1910 have upheld their Indian identity through time and space and have maintained themselves as a distinct and conspicuous Indian Community throughout.

B. Criterion 83.11(b) – Distinct Community

1. **Introduction** – Organize evidence in time periods that document the group’s **social** and specific history and circumstances, but 20-year periods may provide a useful framework. Indicate the events that mark each time period’s beginning and end. Provide information for each period.

First, describe the social group at different points in time by answering questions such as: Who are the actual group members? How are they related to one another and what is the group’s composition? Where do they live, socialize, and celebrate life events? What social institutions (churches, neighborhood, schools, social clubs, interest groups, cemetery, or economic pursuits) support the member’s social interaction?

Second, provide evidence describing what the members are doing with one another, particularly activities that distinguish it members from non-members. Some examples of social interaction include marriage between the group’s members, seasonal celebrations, informal get-togethers, and group reunions. Demonstrate that the petitions membership participates in these activities.

In addition, the petitioner may provide evidence of cultural practices specific to the group such as shared language, religious activities, or specific cultural knowledge and practices commemorating the group’s historical heritage that are not recent interpretations. Thoroughly explained how each piece of evidence meets this criterion.

2. 1900 to 1909
3. 1910 to 1919
4. 1920 to 1921
5. 1930 to 1939
6. 1940 to 1949
7. 1950 to 1959
8. 1960 to 1969
9. 1970 to 1979
10. 1980 to 1989
11. 1990 to 1999
12. 2000 to 2009
13. 2010 to 2019
14. 2020 to present
15. Summary
16. Provide applicable supporting evidence...

B. Criterion 83.11(b) – Distinct Community**[] B1. Introduction****2. The Tribe has lived together in community since historic times (1900-present).**

The historical documentary record, as well as oral history and contemporary observation, clearly demonstrate that the Salyersville Indian Community populations persist and remain integrated through various social-cultural events, institutions (church, revival), shared economic activity such as seasonal migration in onion fields, and other social-cultural activities and mechanisms that support the members [continued] social interaction. In the first half of 1900s, endogamy remained pronounced, and served to continue to connect the families both in the home communities remaining near Salyersville and Carmel, and those who later moved to Ohio, Michigan, or Oklahoma for reasons of employment.⁹²

⁹² See Dovie Cole, “We lived like Indians...”, (Carlson 451-460).

The sparse academic literature making mention of the SIC mostly referred to them as being among a number of “eastern Indian Survivals” who, while still distinct and asserting an Indian identity, were predicted to soon disappear due to the forces of social and cultural assimilation.⁹³ The Salyersville Indian families, however, have instead continued to remain distinct and assert an Indian identity and adhere to certain social-cultural practice and understandings that maintain their distinct Community population. While that marriage within the group lessened after World War 2, the growth of interfamily gatherings arose and have since served to bring the families together, as did certain churches.⁹⁴ About a decade after the completion of my PhD dissertation regarding history and identity of the Salyersville Indian Population, a number of their elders who had long shared and interacted through reunions and working on their families’ histories and genealogies, posed the idea of organizing and incorporating as an Indian tribe. After much discussion and debate and reaching out to others, an interim council was created, and the group was organized as the SIC in 2015. Since that time, the tribe has organized and held “annual gatherings” open to all enrolled and not-enrolled but eligible members and their families able to attend, conduct business, and celebrate all things SIC. In addition, blocks of families living either back around Salyersville and Carmel, up around the old muckfields neighbors have held regional “family” reunion regularly since the 1970s. Since the early 1980s, the two-day long Cole-Nichols reunion has been one of the largest and, while now only one-day long, continues to bring in relations from all the disperse areas, and feature music, business meetings, bingo, and a host of other activities.⁹⁵

So distinctive was the Indian community that, from before 1900 to at least the 1950s, local whites often referred to both the people and their primary residences centered on Big Lick as “The Cole Nation”. The name arose from the fact that Cole was the most prominent surname then associated with the community population.⁹⁶ The aforementioned 1901 *Tennessean* gave detail on the community reflected in the 1900 census, and in doing so made clear this was indeed a distinctive settlement of Indian people, and remarked on some of those features, stating for instance that

“Chief Tiney used to be a famous “witch factor”. When the simple fold living near the Cole settlement could not get their bread to rise or their cows to give good milk, they would blame the witches and send for “Old Tiney”, who would appear and prescribe remedies, with the result being the superstitious victims would for a time be convinced that the witch had been deprived of her power to inflict further injury.

The Cole Nation schoolhouse is near Uncle Tiney’s home. There are 53 pupils in the district, and 37 of them were in school at the time of our visit. The young lady teacher and others having dealings with the folk of that settlement have a great time with the names. They generally use the same name at several christenings and affix some distinguishing word or

⁹³ It seems most all original Indigenous language ability was abandoned by this time for all the SIC families by 1900, and records suggest had done so long before (Carlson 2003: _).

⁹⁴ Carlson 2003: 570-573, Figure 69, Lois Cole, “Evangelist Cole is an Indian woman who has experience many supernatural miracles”

⁹⁵ Carlson 2003: 567-570; Figure 65, Reunion fliers.

⁹⁶ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. “Kentucky’s Indians,” *The Tennessean*: 8; see also Price 1950b, who therein remarks considerable on so-called “Indian traits” then practiced among the Community members.

phrase. Thus, they have Old Valentine and Young Valentine, Bug Adam and Little Adam. Preacher John, John Page and John Wesley, Old George, Long George, and George Washington. The settlement has sons named for Washington, Jefferson, Buchanan, Lincoln, Tilden, and Garfield”⁹⁷

A distinguishing feature that the SIC share with other Native American tribes is that they remain bound together through kinship dynamics reinforced by various social and cultural mechanisms through time and space, which enable their people to maintain Community relations. This is demonstrated though the seasonal migrations their families undertook to work the Ohio and Michigan onion fields, circa 1920-40s. Despite the SIC families being scattered and lacking reliable transposition, visitation for social or cultural reasons such as funerals, wakes, and so forth was sustained on a community-wide basis. That distance and absence of transportation was not a hindrance to participation even before 1900 is demonstrated through a 1895 newspaper article in which one SIC woman who traveling between the Big Lick community and Ohio, explained traveling long-distances on foot with relative ease. Subtitled “A Cherokee Squaw Stops Off at the Wharfboat and Almost Frighten Frank Kehoe to Death”, the article relayed that

“Sally Cole, a full blood Indian squaw, stayed all night at the wharfboat last night...Her home is in Magoffin county, Kentucky...Sallie is a very intelligent talker and was very free in her conversation. She was going up as far as Huntington on the boat when she would walk the rest of the way to her home. She said she was “death to the ground” and could cover 50 miles a day right along.”⁹⁸

Up to World War Two many SIC families from Magoffin County, KY and Carmel, Ohio, went north to work the onion “muckfields” multiple times a year. The fact that, even as they undertook seasonal movements, back and forth between Kentucky and the Ohio-Michigan onion fields. They did so in large interconnected multi-family groups, which made them appear to be a distinct community population to outsider observers.⁹⁹

Since the 1950s, at least half of the SIC population from Magoffin County had resettled around the half-dozen or so onion-growing muckfield areas in northern Ohio and southern Michigan. However, many moved into a more stable middle-class income, and increasing access to more reliable cars and trucks made traveling between the Ohio and Michigan residences and family back in and around Salyersville easier. The onset of mass communication, most notably the telephone and, more recently, internet has served to increase interaction and the ability to maintain relations with kin.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. “Kentucky’s Indians...,” *The Tennessean*: 8.

⁹⁸ [a.u.] July 24, 1895, “Lo! The Poor Indian,” *Portsmouth Daily*. To relate another interesting and relevant anecdote: When interviewing SIC members living in the neighbors of the Partello, Michigan area onion fields in Calhoun County while undertaking research for my PhD dissertation project, I encountered an old women, at least the mid-60s in age, who was going to walk from her home in that now tiny burg of to the County Seat in Marshall—a distance of twenty miles—to attend the county fair. Although she seemed more that at ease at undertaking the impressive feat, I of course gave her a ride

⁹⁹ Carlson 2003:500-517.

¹⁰⁰ Carlson 2003: 518-554.

One of the few academic or popular writings that have made the connection between the Salyersville Indian population in Magoffin County and the onion-growing muckfields of Michigan and Ohio is again the aforementioned geographer Edward Price's "The Mixed-Bloods..." (1950b). His study again made clear that, regardless of these demographic movements, they remained a distinct, identifiable community of people who asserted and Indian identity, and were accepted as such by those non-Indians they interacted with on an everyday basis. The geographer highlighted certain "traits" he attributed to their Indian heritage such as having "made a business weaving and selling baskets", digging, using and even selling herbs, and featuring the aforementioned women in particular who he noted calls herself "3/4 Cherokee and appears to be partially correct" in part because she was "inter-planting corn with beans."¹⁰¹

Group members are first and foremost defined by internally-recognized kinship relations. Since 2015, to qualify for enrollment in the organized SIC political organization, one must demonstrate one's place and position in this relation by proving descent from one of the Collins, Cole or Gibson families that founded the land base of the Salyersville Indian population in the 1850s.¹⁰² The SI, however, still define relations based in kinship reckoning and the group's social-cultural composition is maintained by it. As endogamy typified all the families since even before that and remained a feature of the group until recent times, most SIC are related to each other in multiple ways. As of today, there are many who have not officially enrolled in the SIC but are still considered part of the social-cultural group, nevertheless.

Since 1900, there has been marked organization and participation in certain social institutions that support the member's social interaction, including having their own churches and schools at points in time, shared cemeteries and residence patterns, and in pursuing particular economic pursuits such as working the northern muckfields. For instance, the SIC had built and maintained their own small school at Big Lick since before 1900, and in the first decade of the 20th century it was one of their own, Squire Wallace Cole. The community would maintain a one road schoolhouse there until the 1950s.¹⁰³

Generally speaking, the SIP has, for many generations, been a very Christian people and perhaps the longest running social-cultural institution maintained by the SIC has been "the church." Since long before 1900, the SIC have maintained and supported their own churches among their community both at the Big Lick in Magoffin County as well as up near Carmel, Ohio. Also, right at the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries the SIP notably nearly wholly converted to the charismatic Holiness sect of evangelical Christianity. Newspaper articles from the first decade of the 1900s show their open-air "revivals," often held in the "The Forks" of the Big Lick, were highly attended and also drew in many local non-Indians when they occurred. The Salyersville Indian would bring their strong adherence to that strain of Christianity with them to the muckfields, where they would often hold services out "on the muck" itself during the height

¹⁰¹ Price 1950b: 282-283, 286; see also Carlson 2003: Figure=44a. Since that time, Salyersville Indian children have mostly attended the public schools where their families lived.

¹⁰² Based on current enrollment criteria.

¹⁰³ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians...", *The Tennessean*: 8, in which the writer referred to it as "The Cole Nation Schoolhouse"; Price 1950: 586; Carlson 2003: 317, Figure 43-Map 17.

of the onion working years.¹⁰⁴ Member have founded or hosted nearly a half-dozen churches in and around those fields since the 1950s, most being Pentecostal, Assembly of God, and Faith Temple Church. The SIC therefore have also had a long tradition of their pastors serving as Community leaders in the social, cultural and political sense. Historically, these have include such notable characters as, Rev. *John Wesley Cole* (Holiness/Pentecostal, early 1900s, Big Lick), Rev. *Lois Cole* (1950-70s, Faith Temple Church in Coldwater, another of which was founded by SIP family near Partello-Olivet fields), or the Rev. *Winfred Collins* (1950-2010s Assembly of God, Eaton and Calhoun Counties, Michigan).¹⁰⁵ Today, SIC ministers continue to serve inadvertently as sort of ambassadors/representatives for their people as does Pentecostal Pastor Rev. "*Cherokee Gibson* "who is well known and respected in the local community and often leads revivals in Magoffin and elsewhere alongside non-Indian pastors, as does Pastor *Roger Hamilton* who leads a small congregation in neighboring Floyd County. Internally they are looked to for social and cultural guidance as leaders in as much as the elected SIC Council and other positions are.¹⁰⁶

During the 1960s and 70s, the SIC remained a mostly conservative Christian community population with political tendencies that Americans describe as right-leaning, but by no means wholly so. Some, like Salyersville Indian *Butch Martin*, took part in the Indian-activist movements and demonstrations during those decades). It is notable that, in regard to political persuasion, there has always been an open mix of political affiliations existing in the community—even within households. For example, back in 1901 "*Chief Tiney*" or "*Uncle Tiney*" *Cole* remarked to a newspaper writer that, while he was Republican, his other cousins, *Wallace* and *Shepard Cole* were office-holding Democrats.¹⁰⁷ Intentional or not, this bipartisan nature of the Community-kinship group has served the community well and shows that the group's kinship and community priorities escape tension over political division and this has allowed the group to exploit the advantage of both when required.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, while being mostly practicing Christians, in the early 1900's many in the community still adhered to ideas and

¹⁰⁴ One Interesting moment of external recognition as Indian people by other Native Americans, that is, an instance of being looked at as Indian by other Indians, occurred during the intersection of "church" activity during the arduous years of working onions in the muckfields of Calhoun County, Michigan. The SIC's elevation of people "in the ministry" was notable even to the Potawatomi natives to the Calhoun County muckland area and who remained in the area. This example concerns *Sally Cole*, whose family worked onion and other vegetable crops in Calhoun County alongside Nottawasippi Potawatomi families who then retained a state reservation in the county (now a federal recognized tribe and reservation). These Indian families would often worship together in the same "*All Nations*" Christian church located near that Potawatomi reservation in Calhoun County. As the story goes, her family often brought "fresh" meats (i.e. 'clean' in that it was wild and prepared 'properly') for church gatherings, dinners or "feasts", and other occasions. Out of respect and appreciation for these acts, Potawatomi church leaders gave her the Potawatomi name of "Mendoka" (also the name of one of that Potawatomi community's progenitor Chief's who evaded removed in the 1830s) and dedicated one of their small individual wooden "prayer houses" in her name. (CA-Sally Cole Notes and Correspondence).

¹⁰⁵ Carlson 2003: 570-573, misc.

¹⁰⁶ CA-Cherokee Gibson Revival Fliers, 2025.

¹⁰⁷ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians...", *The Tennessean*: 8, in which the writer referred to it as "The Cole Nation Schoolhouse";

¹⁰⁸ Carlson 2003: 584-588, 595-602.

practices often deemed as superstition and not seemingly compatible with Christianity. The continued belief in “witches”, for example, harkens back to pre-Christian traditions.

Today, while some cultural features distinguish them from non-members, such as trends in endogamy and residency, new activities have arisen that do the same.¹⁰⁹ For instance, since its organization in 2015, the SIC governments and corporation—which the organizational effort in and of itself demonstrates the SIC actively and coherently working to bring the community together—organizes and holds activities solely for the benefit of their people, enrolled and not. As they have since the mid-1900s, other regional family reunions also promote social interaction.¹¹⁰ In the recent generations, SIC manage to still come together and celebrate life events. Continued participation in activities such as wakes, funerals, reunion, and so forth, reinforce identity and community through time and space.

Since the inception of the SIC government and its incorporation, that official entity has undertaken many activities to serve the community, such as sponsoring holiday gift give-away and clothes drives for members and occasionally provides assistance in other ways. Since [2018], the tribe has also organized a two-day long Annual Community Gathering that calls in all geographic representatives, the first being devoted to various business meetings and social activities in a nearby hotel which is followed the next day by the grand SIC Annual gathering that is held either in the Pioneer Village Park in Salyersville, or in the nearby Community Hall located in the same town.

Summary

The historical record, coupled with the sparse but specific academic literature regarding the community, clearly demonstrate that the SIC has retained socio-cultural distinctiveness since 1900. These dynamics and activities have maintained a sense of community between those living in the home settlements near of Salyersville and Carmel and the dozen or so satellite districts/neighborhoods in OH, MI and OK, where SIC families have settled in large, multi-family groups in the past century for reason of working those states’ onion and oil fields.¹¹¹ While prior to WW2, the Salyersville Indians were made distinct by the high rate of intermarriage back into the community, that was only one of many practices that distinguished them from those non-Indians they lived among. Since that time, occasions for community socialization have been centered on the churches and family institutions and obligations, such as funerals, reunions, revivals and other activities bringing together the scattered families from Salyersville, Carmel and MI, OH and OK. In the past decades, those continued activities are

¹⁰⁹ While the once distinctive cultural feature of endogamy, that is marriage, within the group had waned considerably by the 1960s, and seldom occurs as close cousins these days, another marriage patterns and dynamics have arisen. That is, starting in the onion work years, intermarriage considerably increased with other “Kentuck/White mountaineer families” from the greater Magoffin County region. At the same time, however, there has also been a significant increase in the number who have married and had children with members of other federally recognized tribes at a rate far higher than white or black America, a trend that has particularly increased in the past 2-3 generations.

¹¹⁰ Reunion lists dating back many decades preserve records of many of these gatherings [ref].

¹¹¹ Some still own some of the original land upon which their ancestors established the community around Big Lick before the Civil war, as well as at the original Carmel settlement that was begun by Salyersville Indian families after that conflict.

complemented by those initiated by the SIC government, such as the yearly Annual Tribal Gathering.¹¹²

¹¹² This writer's PhD Dissertation, "Who's Your People" (2003) provides a much more in-depth description and analysis of shared socio-cultural activities, experiences, religious practices, and other activities specific to the group from 1900 to today. Documents source material/evidence citations are immediately accessible through links provided in the digital copy of said dissertation provided by the tribe and which accompanies this petition document.

C. Criterion 83.11(c) – **Political Influence or Authority**

1. **Introduction** – Organize evidence in time periods that reflect the petitioner’s **political events**

describe how leaders have represented the group and its members. Discuss how the group has chosen its

2. 1900 to 1919 See **Carlson 2000:**
3. 1920 to 1939
4. 1940 to 1959
5. 1960 to 1979
6. 1980 to 1999
7. 2000 to present
8. Summary
9. Provide applicable supporting evidence...

3. The Tribe has governed itself since historic times.

By making kinship a higher priority than other potential affiliations, such as those based on religion, class or political affiliations, the Salyersville Indian have managed to keep their Indian identity and distinct Community from being obscured over time. That is, by highlighting the functional aspects of kin arrangement over time, the economic and social cooperation of kin works to maintain the size and strength of the Salyersville Indian families and Community. That is, the Community is first and foremost a kinship network articulated through and supported by interrelated family groups who have been aligned together since the 18th century.¹¹³ That is, their Community is based in family relations that provide kinship links and the obligations that go with them, cooperative efforts, sources of knowledge, and emotional and material support. In this context, the SIC Community is first and foremost grounded in a ‘functional kinship network’, which involved not just a collection of individuals, “but communities where every person is many person” through active kinship association. Kin groups are, however, limited in size, location, and composition, and need to be actively

¹¹³ More specifically, the SIC seem to reflect a segmentary lineage system grounded in bilateral kinship reckoning. A *segmentary lineage system* is loosely defined as a type of political organization in which the large group is broken into clans or ‘families’, which are then divided into lineages. This allows people to join together over time and space. The SIC families today often organize their family reunions based on these lineages in manner that emphasizes their relations with the other SIC families and lineages, and not their separateness genealogically or geographically. See Carlson, 2003: p809, footnote #1575.

maintained through their own governing methods and means. In the SIC case, identity and community are supported by functional kin affiliations based on standards of social and economic cooperation and benefit in a manner that reflects a conscious attempt to promote stable relation among the inter-related families. Kinship dynamics serve to connect the people among the geographic 'band' and expand the social whole of this population by connecting people together and a similar to the 'trajectory' concept. When thus united, family expand the kinship community network's cultural and material resources. This same network is what creates, dispenses and reinforces ideas of history and identity among the families. The active notion of 'kin' and the responsibilities and obligations that go with it, serve to consistently sustain this population's identity and Community. In sum, flexible kinship-oriented mode of social, political and economic organization enables and promotes well-being and a sense of identity and community who follow it.¹¹⁴ Political authority and influence in the group therefore are defined, exerted, and maintained by and through these kinship dynamics.¹¹⁵

SIC have therefore always exemplified the indigenous model that emphasizes the interconnectedness of family-band-tribe-nation with family being the key political unit that defines the tribe and nation. The communal purchase of the land created the Big Lick Indian village clearly exhibits this in action. The title of "chief" seems to have been used by outsiders to describe some among them until at least the early 1900s.¹¹⁶ Internally, the historical record shows that certain men and women simultaneously acted as 'headmen' of equal authority and importance throughout the 20th century, although they did not use this anthropological term. In the 1900s, while the title of 'chief' fell by the wayside, elders continued to serve in the same role, anthropologically speaking, as the obligations and responsibilities that went with these leadership roles remained. Since the late 1800s, leadership roles have been filled by specific men and women who often did so as preachers, church elders, or as individuals securing local political positions that directly affected the everyday lives of the SIC, such as serving as Justice of the Peace in the county in which they lived. Indeed, in the first decade of 1900s, the Salyersville Indians despite being very poor by most American standards, had their own school and teachers, churches and preachers, even a lawyer and some serving in local elected roles of authority. Again, "Uncle Tiney" Cole's 1901 interview exemplifies this, in which the interviewer remarks

"The old chief seemed very proud of the opportunity to talk about his Indian relationship and to have his picture taken, but he seemed prouder still of a big twist of "home-made", which the correspondent gave him. Wallace Cole, a son of Chief Tiney, is a Democratic politician of some local influence. His brother, Shepherd Cole, who lives in Hager in this county, is a well-known lawyer and politician and is a Democratic candidate for County Attorney. These two, Wallace and Shepherd Cole, were a little more ambitious than their kinsmen. They attended

¹¹⁴ Carlson 2003: 581-588. This observation aligns with anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan's articulation of Oneida Eli Parker assertion made back in the late 1800s: that it is kin that make one "Indian", and the Indian, in his or her everyday relations, is the one who defines who and what this kin comprises through time and space. Carlson 2003: 607.

¹¹⁵ See Carlson 2003: 5-6, 11, 14, 20-22.

¹¹⁶ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians," *The Tennessean*: 8.

*school, and for several years Wallace taught the public school in the Cole district. Wallace being a teacher and Shepherd a lawyer, they became the tribes' mentors, so to speak."*¹¹⁷

Between 1907 and 1909, a considerable correspondence took place between the SI population applying for enrollment as Eastern Cherokee and the federal commissioner in charge of that effort, Guion Miller, and those communications make clear the brothers *Shepard* and *Wallace Cole* were indeed leading the Community in that effort.¹¹⁸

Moving in large, interconnected family groups working as seasonal laborers on the Midwest onion fields—the coordination of which itself was complicated and required leadership—the Salyersville Indian families maintained the tightly knit kinship community bound the SIC together not unlike the typical anthropological understanding of band level political organization among indigenous tribes. As such, the kinship communities that created the half-dozen or so satellite bands of the SIC essentially acted like bands in the anthropological sense of the concept—groups of interrelated families, living, working, and intermarrying in a manner that maintained and strengthened and kept the tribe unified as a distinct Indian Population and Community.¹¹⁹ In doing so, leadership and community authority is most often exerted through 'head-of-family' who unofficially came together to resolve internal disputes in a manner that restores and maintains balance. This extends to issues and concerns arising between families of the Community or how to handle actions of individuals that may adversely affect the group.

There is some generational deference when it comes to who wields authority among community members. In particular, the SI exhibits a great deference to the elders, who regardless of their leadership abilities, are always held in high veneration. Simply by virtue of life experience, elders wield considerable influence. This is similarly reflected in their use of the term "Aunt" or "Uncle" for both elders as well as those of more recent generations of adulthood who haven't quite reached elder status. This was made apparent in the aforementioned 1901 Tennessean article, when the writer referred "Chief Tiney" while noting that the community instead called him "Uncle Tiney"¹²⁰

As stated above, the SIC have also had a long tradition of their Pastors serving as Community leaders in the social, cultural and political sense. Historically, these have included such notable characters as, Rev. John Wesley Cole (Holiness/Pentecostal, early 1900s, Big Lick), Rev. Lois Cole (1950-70s, Faith Temple Church in Coldwater, another of which was sounded by SIP family near Partello-Olivet fields), or the Rev. Winfred Collins (1950-2010s Assembly of God, Eaton and Calhoun Counties, Michigan). Today, SIC ministers continue to serve inadvertently in a role as a sort of ambassadors/representatives for their people as does Pentecostal Pastor Rev. "*Cherokee Gibson*" who is a well-known and respected in the local community often leads revival in Magoffin and elsewhere alongside non-Indian pastors, as does Pastor Roger Hamilton who leads a small congregation in neighboring Floyd County. Internally, they are looked to for

¹¹⁷ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians" *The Tennessean*: 8. See Carlson 2003: 302-312. Both men would serves as Justices of the Peace for their county districts in this decade and thus served as leaders outside their own Indian community while at the same time serving it.

¹¹⁸ Carlson 2003: 340-370.

¹¹⁹ Carlson 2003: 580-606.

¹²⁰ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians" *The Tennessean*: 8.

social and cultural guidance as leaders in as much as the elected SIC Council and other positions are.¹²¹

Throughout the 1900s, the SIC remained a mostly very conservative Christian community with political tendencies that Americans describe as right-leaning, but by no means wholly so. It is notable to note that, in regard to US party political affiliation and persuasion, there has always been a open mix of both existing in the community—even the same households. Again, recall, for example, back in 1901, “*Chief Tiney*” or “*Uncle Tiney*” Cole remarked that, while he was Republican, his other cousins, *Wallace* and *Shepard Cole*, were Democrats.¹²² Intentional or not, this outward bipartisan nature of the Community-kinship group has served the community well. It also shows that the group’s socio-cultural reinforces obligations and respect in regard to kinship and community prioritizes avoided escape tension over political party division, and this has allowed the group to exploit the advantage of having ties and influence with both when required for the benefit of the community and its members.¹²³

Leadership, influence and authority within and for the Community population has always been both overtly and subtly exerted by woman. This has been made especially apparent in the past half century as exhibited through certain women who have tirelessly exerted efforts, time and money organizing the annual family reunions which arose in the 1970s and 80s and conducting family “business meetings” for example. The efforts at documenting and compiling the history and genealogies of the SIC families has been spearheaded by a particularly adept cadre of women who undertook such activities during the 1980s and 90s, and whose efforts kept alive knowledge and pride in that history and ancestry.

Since 2015 the SIC has formally reorganized their political structure with a competent, functioning Elective and General Councils, and Executive offices including Chief, Vice-Chief, Secretary, Treasury, and an enrollment department all of whose duties and responsibilities are explained and defined under a constitution ratified by the General Council, which is comprised of all enrolled members. In [2018], the group incorporated as an Indian community. Among its many activities and roles, the government’s main function has been to position the Community to where it can successfully obtain recognition. But in recent years, the SIC government moved to offer different community services and activities, from occasionally providing family financial aid and initiating fundraising efforts, to providing volunteer aid in the local greater-Salyersville area non-Indian community, such as they notably did helping distribute food and clothing after the 2023 floods devastated the area.

Summary

Salyersville Indian identity and sense of community has proven to be resilient despite facing so much social and economic adversity and hardship over many generations and this is because both are based in kinship connections and the obligations that go with them. In practice, political influence is loosely based on the active relationships of families consolidated as ‘bands’ the most prominent being those geographically situated near Salyersville and Carmel and extending to those in Oklahoma and the muckland area of Michigan and Ohio. Indeed,

¹²¹ CA- Cherokee Gibson Revival Fliers, 2025

¹²² Carlson 2003: 580-606.

¹²³ Ibid.

kinship organization has always been the fundamental foundational political unit of influence and authority of any and all Indigenous peoples of North America and the SI have largely operated in that model.¹²⁴

Summary

SIC Indian community and identity has proven to be resilient despite facing so much adversity. That is because both are based in culturally defined and reinforced kinship connections and obligations. That is, the community is based on active relationships of families loosely consolidated as geographic 'bands', the most prominent being those in the Salyersville KY and Carmel OH locations and extending into. Indeed, kinship organization has always been the fundamental foundational political unit of any and all Indigenous peoples of North America.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Carlson 2003: *ibid.* Of course, much of authority in influence within the Community has been unofficial, and arising from individual position within in the generations, within the church, or charisma, education or simply the abilities to achieve the task at hand.

¹²⁵ This writer's PhD Dissertation, "Who's Your People" (2003) provides a much more in-depth description and analysis of SIC action and activities that demonstrate who SI leaders exert influence and authority within the group through changing cultural and political condition from 1900 to today. That documents source material/evidence citations are immediately accessible through links provided in the digital copy of said dissertation provided by the tribe and which accompanies this petition document.

E. Criterion 83.11(e) – Descent of current members from historical Indian tribe or tribes that combined

1. Introduction – Identify the historical Indian tribe or tribes that combined and the historical lists or records naming members of the historical Indian tribe.
 2. n/a Description of the current membership list...
 3. n/a Description of past membership list...
 4. **Explanation of historical lists of members of historical Indian tribe (see II.D above) and how current members descend from members of the historical Indian tribe.**
 - a. **Identify specific members of the historical Indian tribe who are ancestral to the petitioning group’s members.**
 - b. **Provide a breakdown of current members by their claimed ancestor in the historical Indian tribe.**
 5. Summary
 6. n/a Provide current and past membership lists, etc....
- *”...the group also may include in this database other members of the group who were important members of the community but do not have descendants in the current group (such as important leaders).
-

5. All of those enrolled in the Tribe descend from a historic Indian Tribe which functioned as a nation. The SIC can demonstrate historical continuity from the “Christian Band of Saponi,” successors-in-interest to the 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation and subsequent treaties the Saponi entered into with Colonial Virginia. Just prior or during that Saponi band’s movement to SE VA and NE TN, after having lived in community in the New River valley straddling the VA and NC border, about the time of the American Revolution, these Christian Saponi became intimately associated with the prominent Chenoska or “Cole/Coal” family, of which the historical records go far to suggest were of Cherokee-Catawba ancestry.¹²⁶ However,

¹²⁶ See Part 2, above. See Carlson 2003. Their applications were ultimately denied because the names “John Cole” and/or “Cuzzie Anderson”, “Bryce Gibson” or “Fannie Green” could not be found on any other Cherokee treaty rolls. The same would happen to those of the SIC Gibson family who also applied. It should be noted that Miller only searched for the English surnames of Cole and Anderson in searching for SIC ancestors, but apparently did not follow up on the SIP applicant’s claim that family surname was originally *Chenoska*. This evidence provided by Wilson Cole is compelling as *Chenoska* indeed translates to “Coal” in the Cherokee language. Wilson was living in Oklahoma when he mentioned that on his applications, and it is likely it was overlooked. See NAM M1104, R278: 35099, Wilson Cole application.

Notably, few of the Christian Saponi *Collins* families applied unless they also had direct ancestors who were Cole or Gibson (which many did), despite their living in the same community and asserting an “Indian” identity, presumably because those family members at that time knew they were descendants of a different historical tribe and therefore did not apply. While also part of the community, those of the Saponi Collins family who did not have any confirmed SIC *Cole* or *Gibson* in their lineage did not apply to the Eastern Cherokee. The historic Saponi tribe sold their land and made treaties of peace in the colonial era with the Governor of Virginia decades before the inception of the United States and were Christianized and considered “citizen Indians” following the Revolutionary War (see Section 2, below). Most, however, could identify families of one or more of those other progenitors’ descendants in their lineage as *endogamy* was still an ongoing cultural feature of the community at that time, just as it had

none of that family's ancestors have been found on any Cherokee or Catawba treaty rolls that would allow them to make that claim here.¹²⁷ The same holds true regarding the Bryce Gibson family claims. Irrespective, both families would join with members of the Christian Band of Saponi and move into the east KY mountain where, prior to the Civil War, they would purchase property that has constituted and represented the geographic core of the Salyersville Indian Community population to this day.

The most important primary documents that make the SIC connection to the historic Saponi living on Governor Spotswood's land in the 1730s and 40s are Orange County, Virginia, Court documents that specifically name members of the Christian Band of Saponi to then have been *John Collins, Alex Machartion, John Bowling, Maniassa, Craft Tom, Blind Tom, Foolish Jack, Little Jack, Charles Griffen, Issac, Harry* and others.¹²⁸ The 1738 and 1743 documents that repeat these names and show the association that allow from tracking the band in the historical record from that point forward. Admittedly making the genealogical connection of these names to the lineage of those Indians carrying the same association of English surnames, namely the Collins, Bowling, and Griffin, is tenuous with the documentary record at hand. However, the distinct geographic and social association of an identifiable group of people bearing those surnames throughout the remainder of the century when records become much clearer, points to the correctness of such an interpretation of early the lineages.

Christian Saponi band history after leaving Spotswood's land and dispersing into VA and NC is a movement in three parts: 1) first when the core Collins families buying land along the Flat River in Orange County NC after lingering in Louisa County Virginia for a short time, followed by moving to the western part of the State during the Revolutionary War and establishing along 2) the New River in what was traditional Catawba Country and where their hunters and traders interacted with settlers. After the War, the New River Community gave way to the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Communities along the Clinch River along the TC and VA borders.¹²⁹ It is from this Community that Valentine Collins' band emerged as a separate

been since at least the early 1800s. The SIC Collins families who had not intermarried with the Coles and Gibsons and did not apply for Cherokee claims during that same event presumably did not do so because they knew they were not descendants from a different historic tribe, which we knew from the historical record to be Saponi.

¹²⁷ These "Cherokee" &/or "Catawba" identity claims made by or about the Cole and Gibson families in the first decade of 1900s have remained unconfirmed. It is well documented that many Saponi separated from the Christian Band had integrated with the Catawba long before the Revolutionary war and that many Catawba subsequently integrated with the Cherokee—however, the evidence connecting the SIC family story to these is presently just a hypotheses without further historical evidence. The SIC are, therefore, not making a claim of Cherokee identity insomuch as they concede that no historical documentation has emerged showing their progenitor families of Cole and Gibson confirming the claim but neither do they deny what they were learned and taught since at least 1900. That many outsiders similarly referred to them as the same is also confirmed through the historical record, regardless of the correctness of that assertion. Indeed, it seems the word had come to mean generic sense "Indian" rather than the specific tribal affiliation. See Carlson 2003: ____ However, it should be reiterated the SIC is presently *not* claiming or petitioning a history or identity as Cherokee or Catawba despite their ancestors assertions otherwise as reflected in the historical record or in their own oral history—that is, they are claiming no rights or claims whatsoever to those historical tribes.

¹²⁸ See VSA-OCOB Roll31: 309; Grinnen 1890: 189-90; Carlson 2003: 101-193.

¹²⁹ Those communities' story are beyond the purview of this history, as intense interaction between the Valentine Collins band and the Greasy Rock and Stone Mountain Christian Saponi faded after the Civil War.

entity as he and his large family separated from the groups. Bryson Gibson, also of the GRC would join as Valentine Collin's band instead preferred moving about the other side of nearby Cumberland Gap into mountains of East Kentucky. There was also an identity and political change that occurred at this time from being classed as "tributary Indians" to "citizen Indians" sometime prior to the Revolutionary War. Because they now paid taxes, could own land, and so forth, they become easier to follow in the documentary record. Some of the Collins and Gibson's fought in Rev War. Billy Cole, however, and presumably the other Coles, were not considered citizens and could not vote until sometimes after the Revolutionary War.¹³⁰

"Chief" *Billy Anderson Cole's* marriage to *Biddy Collins*, a daughter of *Valentine Collins* and wife () *Gibson*, would be among those relationships with the prolific Saponi *Collins* and associated *Gibson* families who ultimately came together to form "Valentine Collins band". Solidified by the cultural obligation and responsibilities that came with such tight kinship and community bonds, they would settle in what would become the greater Salyersville area by the mid-1980s and the core of who would be recorded as The "Salyersville District Indian Population" in 1910 and 1910 censuses.¹³¹ The name Salyersville Indian Community itself comes, in part, from the 1900 and 1910 Federal Census in which they which were recorded as the Indian Population Schedule for the Salyersville District of Magoffin County, Kentucky. The SIC Community membership and enrollment is built upon these censuses (see below).

¹³⁰ [a.u.] October 7, 1901. "Kentucky's Indians" *The Tennessean*: 8. See Carlson 2003: 302-312. Therein, Uncle Billy states: "My father, "Old Billie" Cole, came from North Carolina. He was three-quarters Indian and was not allowed to vote until after the war, but I have voted ever since I was 21 years old. I have voted for eighteen candidate for president. My first vote was for John Quincy Adams and my last vote was for McKinley. I always vote Republican. I have lived on the Big Lick a long time, and I have outlived nearly all my children. Me and my old woman were might poor and could not provide for a large family, so we only raised fourteen children to be grown, and now they all dead but six. I have 44 grandchildren, 53 great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren."

¹³¹ By the time of the families' arrival in that is now the greater Salyersville area, the historical records shows that, despite being mixed, look at themselves to be "Indian" and asserted an Indian identity, although they had come to call themselves, and were being called by others, "Cherokee", "Catawba" and/or "Pony Indians" (Carlson 2003).

F. Criterion 83.11(f) – Membership composed principally of persons not members of any federally recognized Indian tribe

1. Introduction- provide a brief overview of how petitioner meets criterion 83.11(f).
2. Provide written statement
3. Summary
4. n/a....

6. None of those enrolled are members of any recognized Indian Tribe.

Membership of the SIC is composed of persons not members of any federally recognize Indian. There are a number of offspring of SIC who are not enrolled SIC but are instead enrolled members of the tribe of their non-SIC parent, which include Saginaw Chippewa, Miami, Huron Band Potawatomi, Fort Peck, Quapaw-Shawnee, Ho-Chunk and other tribal affiliations. In summary, there are no SIC who are dual enrolled.

V. **Bibliography**—Include information: Author, title, date, number of pages, published or location (in archives or personal/group collection: where OFA may view it of a copy cannot be made).

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B. Supplemental Works

Acronyms and Bibliography

Code:

[a.p.] = associated press

[a.u.] = author unknown

[n.d.] = no date

[s.u.] = source unknown

ctb. = contributed b

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