

do not seem to have met with much success. Aurelius Piper, Sr. even voiced numerous complaints in the 1970's and 1980's about the inability of the group's members to act together in any significant fashion.

Since the mid-1990's, none of the documentation demonstrates that the petitioner has maintained a distinct community. The evidence presented by the petitioner, therefore, is insufficient to meet criterion 83.7(b) for the period 1972 to the present. In summary, the evidence shows that the historical Golden Hill dwindled from a viable community last identified in a 1823 overseer's census to two women who had petitioned the State in 1841 and 1846. The evidence for William Sherman and subsequent generations of GHP descendants does not demonstrate that this small family was part of a distinct community. Therefore, the GHP does not meet criterion 83.7(b) for any time since 1823.

The petitioner does not meet criterion 83.7(c), which requires a petitioner and its antecedents to have maintained political influence over its members as an autonomous entity from historical times to the present. The historical Golden Hill Indians and the historical Turkey Hill Indians were separate tribes that shared a similar culture and language. Land purchase documents for the 17th and 18th centuries show two separate entities. The Colony and later the State treated the historical Golden Hill and historical Turkey Hill as distinct political and legal entities evidence by separate reservations and overseers during this period. Therefore, evidence of political authority for the historical Turkey Hill Indians does not demonstrate the same for the historical Golden Hill Indians, and vice versa. The available evidence does not show that the two groups ever formed a single autonomous political entity. If the petitioner asserts that a historical amalgamation of the two groups occurred, it needs to submit specific evidence to demonstrate this amalgamation. Accordingly, the following summary focuses on the political influence of the historical Golden Hill and its predecessors.

For the period from the 1630's to 1761, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the historical Golden Hill maintained political influence over their members as an autonomous entity. Deeds from the 17th century suggest the Pequannock sachems exercised political influence through consensus and consultation with other tribal members. Land transactions between the tribe and colonial authorities listed leaders and provided some information, from an

external point of view, concerning the aboriginal political structure.

In 1761, the historical Golden Hill still had a sachem whom the Colony recognized as a leader. Since the Colony dealt with a group that had recognized leaders and the evidence documents the group acting in concert to exercise political influence, the petitioner meets 83.7(c) from 1637 to 1761 for the historical Golden Hill.

For the period from 1761 to 1802, the petitioner presented sufficient evidence that the historical Golden Hill Indians maintained political influence over the group's members as an autonomous entity. The last sachem, John Shoran, died in 1761. There is sufficient evidence in the form of protests against encroachments on the Golden Hill reservation by non-Indians to demonstrate that a very small group of Indians continued to display some measure of political influence or authority. The evidence consists mainly of petitions to the General Court (later General Assembly) and official government reports from 1763 to 1765, 1774 to 1780, and 1797 to 1802. The set of petitions from 1797 to 1802 documented the historical Golden Hill's approval of the sale of the last portions of the historical Golden Hill reservation, located in modern-day Bridgeport. Similar petitions have been accepted in previous acknowledgment decisions as sufficient evidence regarding political influence. Therefore, this evidence is sufficient to meet 83.7(c) from 1761 to 1802 for the historical Golden Hill.

The evidence does not demonstrate that there was an identifiable Golden Hill entity that maintained political influence among its members from 1802 to 1933. After the sale of the Bridgeport reservation in 1802, there were no further actions taken by a group as a political entity. There is no person identified in any official State reports as a sachem or leader after the death of John Shoran in 1761. After 1802, there were no further group petitions. The two petitions filed by Ruby Mansfield and Nancy Sharp alias Pease do not demonstrate influence or authority over a group because the two women petitioned as individuals and as "sole surviving heirs" of the Golden Hill Indians, not as representatives of a group or tribe. The petitioner maintains that William Sherman functioned as a leader during his lifetime (1825–1886). The evidence, however, does not demonstrate that he actually functioned as a leader of an identifiable Golden Hill group. The petitioner also claims that William Sherman's son, George Sherman, functioned as a leader in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

While George Sherman was referred to in some newspaper articles as a "chief," there is no documentation available to show that any identifiable group acknowledged his authority or that he acted on any group's behalf. Therefore, the petitioner has not demonstrated political influence and authority for 1802 to 1933.

The material submitted to demonstrate political influence or authority from 1933 until 1972 does not meet the requirements of criterion 83.7(c). In 1933, George Sherman's daughter, Ethel Sherman, began referring to herself as a "Chieftess." However, there is no available evidence to support the claim as anything more than self-identification. There is no evidence to indicate that Ethel Sherman was able to gather a number of people together or access any money or resources from them for group purposes. There is also no evidence submitted to demonstrate that her position came about as part of any group consensus. An analysis of the early and mid-20th century documents indicates that the individuals whom the petitioner now credits as political leaders were acting to guarantee individual interests, not those of any wider group. In order to overcome this deficiency, the petitioner must produce evidence of leaders acting in the interests of an identifiable group that extends beyond an individual or one branch of one family.

For the period 1972 to the present, the petitioner submitted a considerable amount of evidence relating to the activities of Aurelius Piper, Sr. The record indicates that he was the first person since 1761 acknowledged by the State as exercising political leadership within a group of individuals claiming to be Golden Hill group members.

The petitioner submitted notices of group meetings for the late 1970's and early 1980's, informing members of upcoming events and requesting their participation. The minutes of these meetings indicate there were low levels of participation by the group's members. The available evidence does not demonstrate that the issues important to Aurelius Piper, Sr. concerned or involved a predominant portion of the group. Much of the evidence for political influence for the late 1980's and early 1990's focused mostly on leadership disputes between Aurelius Piper, Sr. and his two sons, with occasional references to the involvement of two of his half-nephews. Even during the 1970's and 1980's when the GHP was most active, the actions taken were by a small number of individuals without broad representation across any family lines. It