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FORT STANWIX NATIONAL MONUMENT

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ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

REPORT

(1923 - 1976)

Submitted by
William N. Jackson
Superintendent

Superintendent's Statement

The administrative history of Fort Stanwix National Monument delineated herewith, is but a sampling of what goes into the establishment of a national park. The incessant efforts of untold private citizens, civic leaders, local, state and federal officials only begin to tell what is required to bring a project of this magnitude to fruition.

The next few pages will attempt to bring a semblance of understanding and continuity to the concept, planning, development and final achievement of Fort Stanwix.

Albeit, this report does not tell the complete story of Fort Stanwix, it does give the reader some insight into its overall development. There is, I'm certain much more data that could be collected. However, it is hoped that this report will provide information, understanding and appreciation for the political process involved in the establishment of a park.

The next person serving as Superintendent, charged with managing this unique cultural resource will have a starting point relative to Fort Stanwix history.



William N. Jackson

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF FORT STANWIX

(1923 - 1976)

As in years past public sentiment and involvement has caused National Parks to be established. Fort Stanwix is no different. To show how this process works the following pages will primarily concentrate on early FOST history relative to planning, before its congressional approval and subsequent presidential proclamation.

The administrative history of Fort Stanwix National Monument is intended to show the continuing efforts of private sector and Government in bringing to fruition a national park, from inception to completion of development and visitor use.

One of the earliest conceived plans for the reconstruction of Fort Stanwix was proposed on October 16, 1923, by the Rome Kiwanis Club. At a meeting of the Kiwanis Club a very ambitious ten (10) year plan was endorsed to mark significant historic spots, especially Fort Stanwix in the city of Rome.

The citizens of Rome heartily endorsed the ten year program of the Mohawk Valley Historical Association. This plan was to secure \$6,000,000 from local and federal Governments to ensure this development. Moreover, the Mayor and Chamber of Commerce were responsible for appointing a committee to name and incorporate an association for the expressed purpose of, acquiring the site of Fort Stanwix, reconstruct the fort and build a museum.

This development would recognize the significance of Fort Stanwix, on the carry between Albany and Oswego, which witnessed the beginning, and was the turning point for the closing of the American Revolution.

The treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, negotiated by Sir William Johnson and the Six Nations established the first definite Western Boundary for the

province of New York, from Fort Bull to the Pennsylvania line. A subsequent treaty (Treaty of 1784) was signed at Fort Stanwix between the new American Government via Commissioners and the Iroquois Confederacy on October 22, 1784, which ended, for all intense and purposes the revolutionary war.

For the next six years, except for 1927, when the city of Rome celebrated the sesquicentennial of Fort Stanwix, nothing was done to further the idea of reconstructing the fort. Then, in 1929, a committee was proposed by the city of Rome to investigate and report to the State legislature on the possibility of erecting a state museum at Rome in commemoration of the siege of Fort Stanwix. This committee made up of state and local officials would be responsible to "report a plan for the erection of a department of the state museum, recommending a suitable area for its location, a suitable character of design and dimensions for the building and a estimate of cost and whatever else is necessary on the part of the citizens, the community, the state or the federal government to give recognition to the great events in our nation's history that have occurred at the Oneida Carrying Place." This resolution is being sponsored by State Assemblyman Skinner in the lower house. This resolution was intended to show the significance of Fort Stanwix, the Oneida Carry and the historic events that have occurred and their relationship and importance to the building of the nation.

In a letter from the Rome Chamber of Commerce dated December 23, 1933 to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, it was suggested that he consider the establishment of a federal park and memorial on the site of Fort Stanwix.

The chamber believes that a federal park would create numerous jobs; such a shrine would make Rome a tourist center, at present practically no tourists visit Rome; and this federal park would be comparable to locating a substantial manufacturing industry in the city.

The Chamber of Commerce has been in touch with Senators Wagner and Copland

and Congressman Sisson regarding this project and believes that in view of the administration's public works endeavors the project has a fair chance of succeeding.

Several months after the chamber's letter to the Secretary of the Interior, Congressman Fred J. Sisson introduced a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire for the Government the site of Fort Stanwix in the city of Rome. Acquisition of the property would create a national park here where the stars and stripes were unfurled in battle for the first time in the face of the enemy. Mr. Sisson's bill called for appropriation of sufficient funds to carry out provisions of the act. It was referred to the House Committee on public lands.

Establishing of a federal park on the site of Fort Stanwix has been long discussed by civic and historical organizations in Rome. The Rome Chamber of Commerce is engaged in preparation of data to be presented at a hearing to be held on the bill at a later date.

On May 21, 1934, Congressman Sisson presented a letter from New York State Historian Alexander C. Flick, to the House Committee on public lands. Mr. Flick's letter supported the establishment of a national monument and park on the site of Fort Stanwix and he concurred with using federal funds for reconstruction as much as practicable. Furthermore, he provided data to substantiate the significance and importance of the fort in American history, by stating the following:

"The Mohawk Wood Creek Carrying Place, historically, is one of the most important spots in North America. For centuries, for both the red men and the whites it served as the connecting link between the Atlantic and the interior of the continent for trade, commerce, war, travel and missionary work. It also was an important link in the evolution of the canal system." The strategic value of this region is known by the fact

that Fort Stanwix was built in colonial days.

"The defense of Fort Stanwix by Colonel Peter Gansevoort in 1777 contributed greatly to Burgoyne's surrender in October of that same year. The display of the American flag on the occasion is a memorable event. The Battle of Oriskany is inevitably associated with the fort.

Westward immigration, the building and operation of the Erie Canal the early turnpikes and the railroads, and the development of central New York were all associated with Rome and vicinity. "These historic landmarks should be preserved and so far as it seems wise restored."

The bill sponsored by Congressman Fred J. Sisson, of Whitesboro, NY, for the establishment of a federal park in Rome, failed to be reported on before Congress adjourned. The measure as proposed is to provide for the federal government to secure a plot of land from the state of New York to develop Fort Stanwix.

Because of the final jam of Legislation, Congressman Sisson was unable to get members of the House Committee together for the purpose of having his measure reported.

Disappointed but not undaunted, members of the Rome Chamber of Commerce and other civic leaders are confident that this measure will be brought to a successful conclusion at the next session of Congress.

On November 13, 1934, a special committee was selected by the Rome Chamber of Commerce to speed up the proposed federal park on the site of Fort Stanwix. The committee's main purpose was to see that the bill introduced in Congress, sped through the various committees, obtain passage by both houses and be signed by President Roosevelt.

Representative Sisson's bill reads as follows:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that when title of the site and or

portion thereof at Fort Stanwix, in the State of New York, together with such buildings and other property located therein as may be designated by the Secretary of the Interior as necessary or desirable for National Monument purposes, shall have been vested in the United States, said area, and improvements if any, shall be designated and set apart by proclamation of the president for preservation as a national monument for the benefit and inspiration of the people, and shall be called the Fort Stanwix National Monument": Provided, that such area shall include at least that part of Fort Stanwix now belonging to the State of New York.

"Sec. 2. That the Secretary of Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized to accept donations of land, interest in land and, or buildings, structures and other property within the boundaries of said national monument as determined and filed hereunder, and donation of funds for the purchase and, or maintenance thereof, the title and evidence of title to lands acquired to be satisfactory to the Secretary of the Interior: Provided, that he may acquire on behalf of the United States out of any donated funds, by purchases at prices deemed by him reasonable, or by condemnation under the provisions of the Act of August 1, 1888, such tracts of lands within the said National Monument as may be necessary for the completion thereof.

"Sec. 3. That the administration, protection and development of the afore-said National Monument shall be exercised under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior by the National Park Service, subject to the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916, entitled ' an act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes'.

The project in 1934, had the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, and today has an excellent chance of being consummated by legislation this year.

On April 2, 1935, the house committee reported favorably on Congressman Sisson's bill to establish a federal park and memorial on the site of Fort Stanwix in Rome, New York. Three months (July 1935) later the Senate acted favorably on a similar bill. Senator Robert F. Wagner, sponsored an identical measure, and the Senate public lands and survey committee reported favorably on it.

Although Senator Wagner's measure (S-739) carried no appropriation, it does permit the federal government to take steps to obtain the site for a federal park.

With the passage by the Senate on August 5, 1935 of the bill to establish a national park in Rome, the National Park Service revealed a plan for development to go into the 1936 budget. Furthermore, with the passing of the bill by the House and the signature of the President, the Secretary of the Interior will be in a position to actually acquire the land by donation and the National Park Service will be able to go ahead with actual physical improvements.

On August 15, 1935, the Wagner-Sisson Act passed by House, 208-73. Then on August 21, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Wagner-Sisson bill providing for the setting aside of state and private lands on the site of Fort Stanwix as a National Monument and shrine.

Sponsored by both Congressman Fred J. Sisson and Senator Robert F. Wagner for the past three years, the efforts of the two democratic representatives from this section of New York have resulted into what promises to become a highly important development for the city of Rome.

The National Park Service, on September 30, 1935, sent Superintendent George A. Palmer, from the Statue of Liberty, to inspect the Fort Stanwix site. Mr. Palmer was sent to Rome by Verne E. Chatelane, Director of the Historic Sites and Buildings Department of the Department of the Interior.

After a cursory examination of the Fort Stanwix site, Fort Bull site, Erie Canal bed and the Carrying Place between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek, he declared that they ranked very high with other projects under supervision of the National Park Service.

Mr. Palmer explained to the Rome Chamber of Commerce that, although the Fort Stanwix bill, signed recently by President Roosevelt, provides for the development of the site of Fort Stanwix, he said he saw no reason why the project couldn't be broadened to include the other sites.

Mr. Palmer concluded his remarks by stating that in his report he would recommend that a member of the National Park Service be sent to Rome to make a detailed study of the various sites.

After legislation was passed establishing Fort Stanwix as a National Monument, twenty-eight years elapsed before plans were revised to complete its development and reconstruction.

On July 17, 1961, Mayor Lanigan proposed that as part of Rome's Urban Renewal Program the site of Fort Stanwix be cleared and a historical attraction be created there. He contended that if this plan were carried out, it would make Rome a prime tourist attraction. Using the Urban Renewal techniques and powers would make land acquisition easy and fairly inexpensive.

Legislators concerned about the dormancy and lack of progress by the federal government on the development of Fort Stanwix, asked in an August 13, 1962 letter to Secretary of the Interior Udall, why?

Senator Javits and Keating and Congressman Pirnie, bluntly asked Secretary Udall why his advisory board has refused to include Fort Stanwix in the National Registry of Historic Landmarks.

One year after the legislators made their request to Secretary Udall, the official bronze marker designating Fort Stanwix as an historical landmark was received by Mayor Wood from the National Park Service. The marker

stated that: "Fort Stanwix has been designated a registered national historical landmark under the provisions of the Historical Sites Act of August 21, 1935." "This site possesses exceptional value in commemorating and illustrating the history of the United States. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service 1963."

Plans were renewed once again by the citizens of Rome, in the early 1960's to reconstruct at least a portion of Fort Stanwix. In 1963, Mr. Gilbert Hagerty, curator of the Fort Stanwix Museum contacted Mr. Charles M. Stotz, architect from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mr. Stotz had been involved in extensive research on pre-revolutionary war forts in western Pennsylvania, and in 1947, he was commissioned by the Fort Ligonier Foundation to supervise the research and planning for the reconstruction of Fort Ligonier. With this background in military fortifications, Mr. Stotz was a likely candidate to chose for consultation on the proposed reconstruction of Fort Stanwix.

In 1964, at the request of the city of Rome, the National Park Service agreed to advise on working the fort site into a proposed urban renewal project.

Local public interest in developing the site took strong root among community organization. On July 14, 1965, Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller signed a bill giving the city of Rome authority to purchase a parcel of state-owned land at the rear of the American Legion home, part of the site of Fort Stanwix. It is expected that the sale to the city by the state will be a token sum, perhaps only \$1. The state office of general services is authorized to set the terms.

The state parcel behind the Legion measures only 56 by 99 feet, but is important in the current archeological studies of the fort and in the hoped for development of a Fort Stanwix tourist attraction. Some digging has already been done on the plot.

In 1965, Rome's planning for development of its historical resources had

broadened to include many sites and structures besides Fort Stanwix, and interest in implementing the Fort Stanwix National Monument Act had revived.

Urban Renewal funds were available to acquire and clear the site. Urban Renewal paid \$221,000 to the city of Rome for the site. At the request of city officials, the National Park Service prepared a master plan for administering, protecting and developing Fort Stanwix National Monument.

Also, in 1965, the Urban Renewal Agency of Rome authorized Col. Duncan Campbell, Director of the William Penn Museum at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to conduct a spot exploratory study of the siege of Fort Stanwix to determine the feasibility of carrying out a full scale archeological project. The results of Col. Duncan Campbell's efforts can be read in two reports: "Archeological Survey, Site of Fort Stanwix" August 20, 1965 and "Illustrative Report of 1965, Archeological Explorations at Fort Stanwix", September 17, 1965.

In February 1966, an economic feasibility report, prepared by Economic Research Associates of Los Angeles, California, was submitted to the city of Rome and the Rome Urban Renewal Agency. This report suggested procedures for developing the historical potential of the area and preserving its cultural heritage - something that would result in a flourishing tourist industry for the area.

A master plan for Fort Stanwix National Monument was delivered by the National Park Service at the request of the city of Rome in 1964. This master plan, issued in 8" x 10" booklet form, was approved on March 14, 1967.

The next major accomplishment was the historians report of 1969. National Park Service historian John F. Luzader compiled a 182 page research report which concentrated on the Fort Stanwix story. This archival research report was entitled "The Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix." Included in the text of the report are seven contemporary British plans of the Fort, two American drawn plans (post siege of 1777), and one diagram

showing the layout of Fort Stanwix in August 1777, as hypothecated by Mr. Luzader.

The National Park Service began a full scale archeological investigation of this site in July 1970 and continued through November 13, 1972. The archeological report was written by National Park Service archeologist Lee Hanson and Dick Ping Hsu.

An eight page interpretive development report was written by National Park Service interpretive planner Nan V. Rickey in March 1971. This report attempts to establish guidelines for the future interpretation and use of the site.

In a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, Rogers C.R. Morton, dated September 5, 1973, it is stated: "The title evidence and accompanying data disclose valid title to be vested in the United States subject to the Rights and easements in Schedule A."

This special warranty deed to the United States was executed by Rome Urban Renewal Agency on June 5, 1973, and recorded in Liber 1970 at page 726 - Oneida County Court House.

It is also noted that, the Rome Urban Renewal Agency and the city of Rome have executed an agreement in favor of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior of the United States Government, dated June 5, 1973, having reference to the right to rent all structures, relocation of all tenants, demolition of all of its buildings, structures and streets and the relocation of utilities preliminary to actual reconstruction.

The land will be used for the purpose set forth in the Act of Congress, dated August 21, 1935. (49 Stat. 665), that use being the establishment of the Fort Stanwix National Monument.

After many years of planning and numerous efforts on the part of both civic minded leaders, state and federal officials, Fort Stanwix National Monument opened to the public on March 10, 1976.

ADDENDUM

(Public--No. 291--74th Congress)

(S. 739)

AN ACT

To provide for the establishment of a national monument on the site of Fort Stanwix in the State of New York.

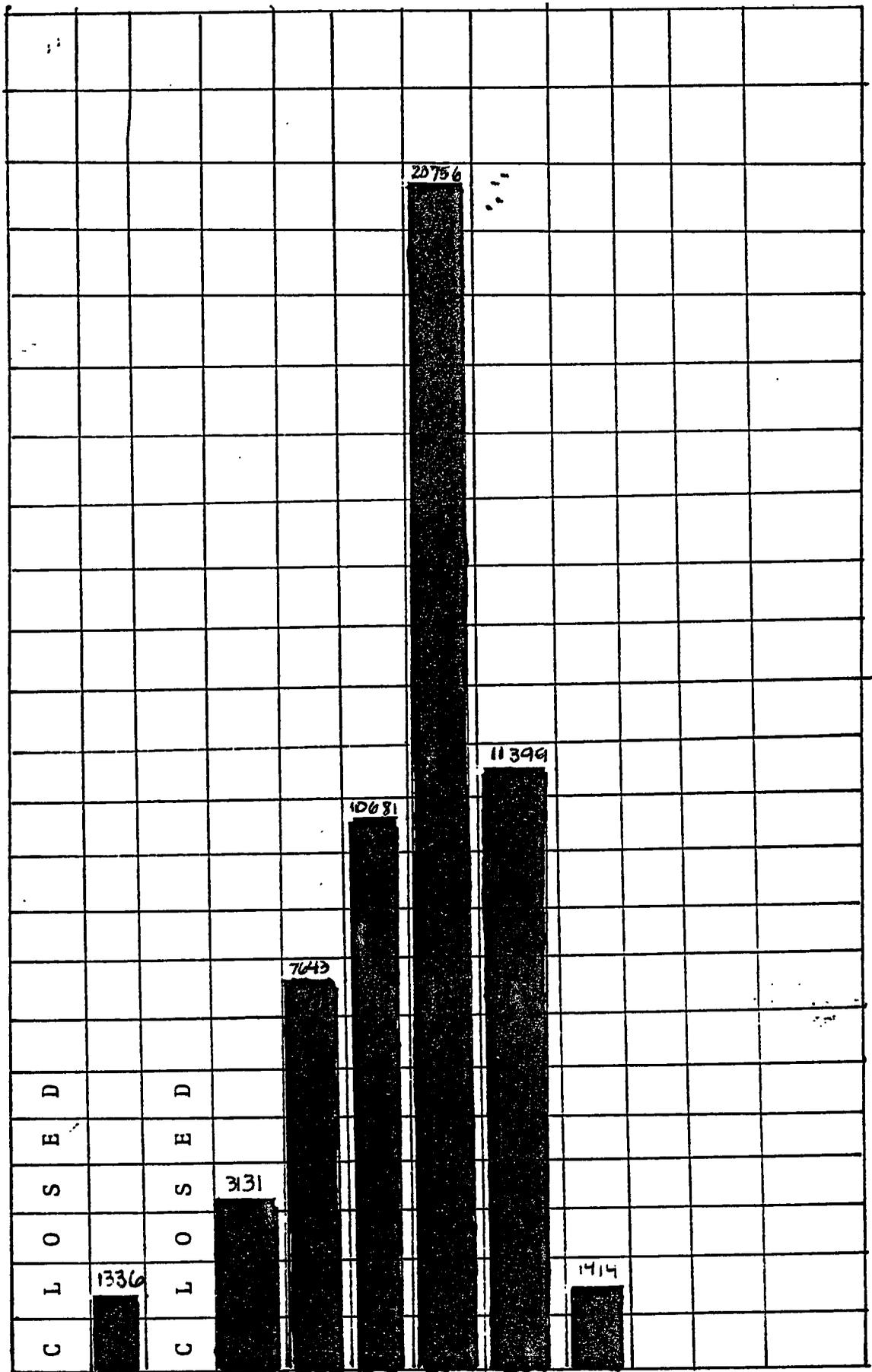
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That when title to the site or portion thereof at Fort Stanwix, in the State of New York, together with such buildings and other property located thereon as may be designated by the Secretary of the Interior as been vested in the United States, said area and improvements, if any, shall be designated and set apart by proclamation of the President for preservation as a national monument for the benefit and inspiration of the people and shall be called the "Fort Stanwix National Monument": Provided, That such area shall include at least the part of Fort Stanwix now belonging to the State of New York.

Sec 2. That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized to accept donations of land, interests in land and/or buildings, structures, and other property within the boundaries of said national monument as determined and fixed hereunder, and donations of funds for the purchase and/or maintenance thereof, the title and evidence of title to lands acquired to be satisfactory to the Secretary of the Interior: Provided, That he may acquire on behalf of the United States out of any donated funds, by purchase at prices deemed by him reasonable, or by condemnation under the provisions of the Act of August 1, 1888, such tracts of land within the said national monument as may be necessary for the completion thereof.

Sec 3. That the administration, protection, and development of the aforesaid national monument shall be exercised under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior by the National Park Service, subject to the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916, entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes", as amended.

Approved, August 21, 1935

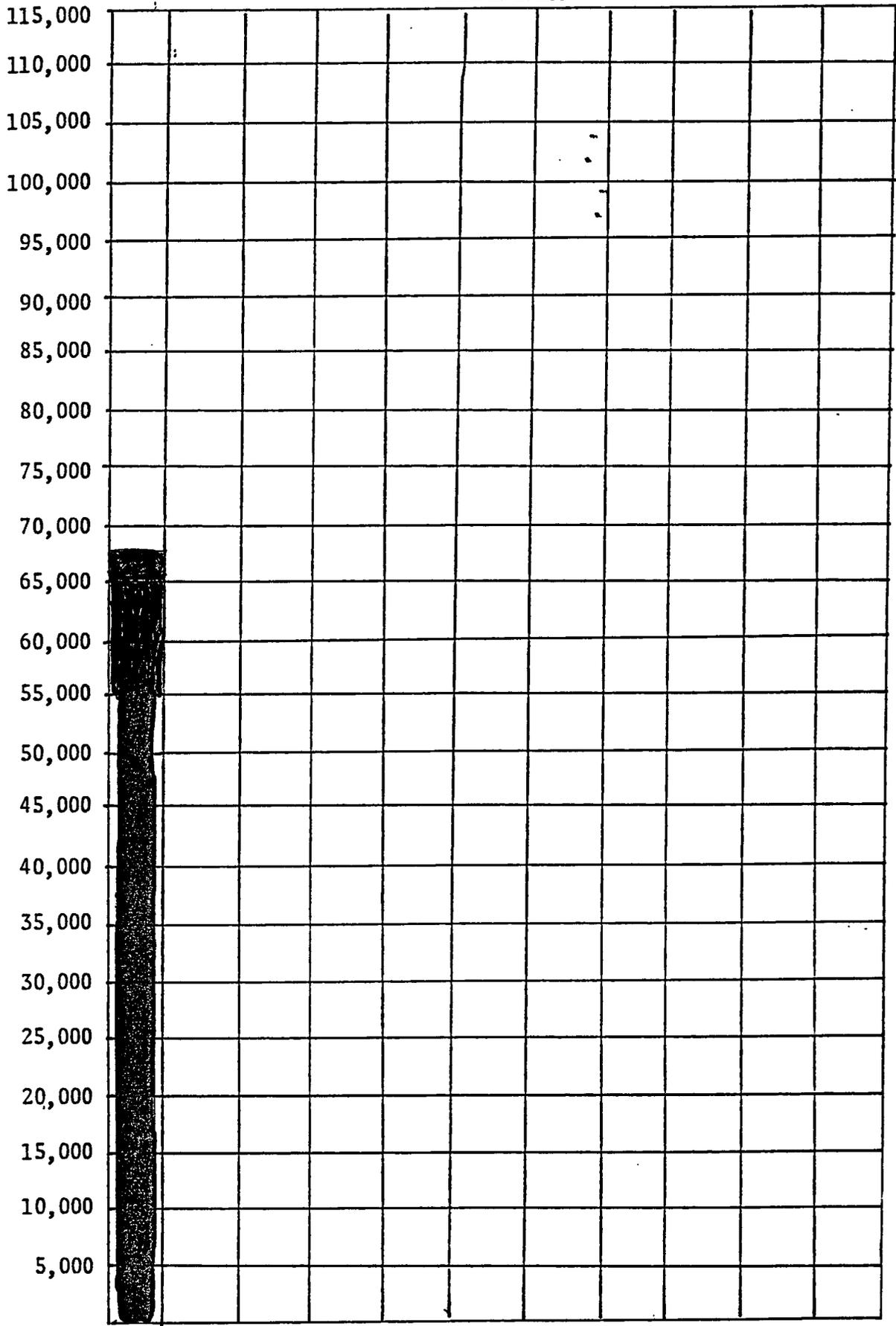
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Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Fort Stanwix National Monument
 Monthly Visitation
 1985

STATISTICAL DATA



AD 0 095

1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1992 1994 1995

Fort Stanwix National Monument
Annual Visitation

ARTICLES - Rome Daily Sentinel

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"William Pierport White proposes One Million Dollars from Congress for Museum", Rome Daily Sentinel, August 8, 1929

"Chamber of Commerce to ask Federal Government to Create Park On Site", Rome Daily Sentinel, January 16, 1934

"Bill in Congress for National Park On Site", Rome Daily Sentinel, March 21, 1934

"Hearing on Proposed U.S. Park to be Held in Washington, D.C.", Rome Daily Sentinel, May 21, 1934

Wagner Supports Fort Stanwix Park Bill; National Shrine Maybe Erected", Rome Daily Sentinel, June 14, 1934

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"Committee Named to Speed Up Proposed Federal Fort Stanwix Park", Rome Daily Sentinel, November 13, 1934

"Sisson Bills for Fort Memorial", Rome Daily Sentinel, March 8, 1935

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"Wagner Bill Passes Senate; U.S. Park Service Ready to Take Over Fort Stanwix Site", Rome Daily Sentinel, Aug. 5, 1935

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"President Signs Monument Bill", Rome Daily Sentinel, Aug. 22, 1935

"Memorial Site Inspected by Park Authority", Rome Daily Sentinel, Sep. 30, 1935

"Legislators Ask Interior Secretary If Department Intends to Ignore Act of Congress on Fort Stanwix", Rome Daily Sentinel, August 13, 1962

"Rocky OK's State Sale of Fort Stanwix Parcel", Rome Daily Sentinel, July 14, 1965

STATISTICAL DATA - FORT STANWIX NATIONAL MONUMENT

VISITATION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1985

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