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By: [Signature]
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Mr. Frank Harrison
Through: Acting Chief Historian

March 2, 1962

Staff Historian Young

Background Data on H. R. 9094, Frances Slocum NM. SWY

At the recent request of Mr. Swenson, we are happy to provide the following background data which should be helpful to him in preparing a report on the above subject.

Frances Slocum (March 4, 1773 - March 9, 1847) was a white child, captured by Indians in Western Pennsylvania in 1778, who lived the remainder of her life as a member of Indian tribes and died at an advanced age in Indiana. Her parents were killed by the Delaware Indians in November 1778, and Frances was adopted by a Delaware Indian family, whom she accompanied westward and finally settled with them near the present Fort Wayne, Indiana, after the American Revolution. Here, she first married a Delaware Indian and later a Miami tribesman named Deaf Man. This couple spent the rest of their life on the Wabash River near the present site of Peru, Indiana. A white traveler to this Miami Indian settlement established her identity as an Indian captive in 1835, but Frances Slocum, when visited by her white relatives in 1837, refused to return with them to their home on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. She was known for her good life as a home maker for her Indian children and grand children. In evaluating the life of Frances Slocum, we find it to have been one of sacrifice, devotion and colorful interest. However, the capturing of white infants on the American frontier during the Colonial and Revolutionary eras occurred in a number of instances, and the story of Frances Slocum is not unique, except that she lived a long and useful domestic life among her adopted people.

It is our understanding that the purpose of H.R. 9094 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take necessary and appropriate measures to move and reinter the remains of Frances Slocum from their present site threatened by a reservoir development and to establish a national monument at the new burial site. In this connection, we should like to note that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments has followed over a period of years an established policy not to recommend the burial places of individuals, or of groups of individuals in cemeteries, for national recognition except in cases of persons of transcendent national importance. The Advisory Board was created under the provisions of the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666), for the purpose of advising the Secretary of the Interior upon questions of national historical significance and other park matters. The Board has consistently taken the view that it is impracticable for the Federal Government to recognize grave sites and cemeteries associated with important personages in

our national history because there are so many of them and that national recognition should be reserved for historic sites and buildings associated with the actual careers and contributions of outstanding historical personages. It is our belief that Frances Slocum does not qualify as a person of transcendent national historical importance.

Mr. Swenson ^{File} is attached.

Rogers W. Young
Staff Historian

Attachment

Copy to: Branch of History

RWYoung:ncb 3/2/62

Sweeney 3/13

*Quinn 3/14
Kahler 3/14*

Harris 3-14

Quinn 3-14

Thompson 19

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Memorandum

To: Legislative Counsel, Office of the Solicitor
Through: Assistant Secretary, Public Land Management

From: Director, National Park Service

Subject: H.R. 9094, Frances Slocum National Monument

Your memorandum of February 1 requested our views on the inquiries of Congressman Aspinall on H.R. 9094, a bill "To authorize the establishment of the Frances Slocum National Monument."

H.R. 9094 directs the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the land or interests in land that he deems necessary to reinter the remains of Frances Slocum and establish a "national monument" at that site. The Secretary is also authorized to construct such facilities for visitor accommodations and markers as he may deem necessary.

Mr. Aspinall suggests that the proposal might not call for a national monument in the normal sense of the term but for a plaque or marker at or near her grave and inquires whether there is authority to take administrative action to accomplish this purpose and, if there is authority, would we be willing to take such action. If there is no authority, the Congressman requested a report on the bill.

The grave of Frances Slocum will be flooded by the proposed Missisquoi Reservoir to be constructed by the Corps of Engineers. We know of no authority of the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land for reintering the remains of deceased persons, especially where graves are being flooded by a project of another agency of the Government.

Also, we feel that there is no authority for the Department to take administrative action to establish a national monument in the usual sense of the term since a national monument as such must either be established by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation.

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Mr. Aspinall asks whether there is authority to place a plaque at the gravesite. The Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666) authorizes the Secretary to "erect and maintain tablets to mark or commemorate historic or prehistoric places and events of national historical or archeological significance." The historical significance of Frances Slocum has not been evaluated by the Advisory Board provided for in the 1935 Act. Until this is done, there can be no final determination of whether authority exists to place a marker at the gravesite. In view of the Board's well established policy to give recognition to burial sites in only those cases involving persons of transcendent importance, it is unlikely that the Board would regard Frances Slocum as entitled to recognition under the Historic Sites Act.

Because of the conclusions expressed herein, we are, in accordance with Mr. Aspinall's request for a report, attaching a draft of report on H.R. 909⁴ for your consideration in preparing a final report.

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Director

Attachment

Copy to: Assistant Secretary--PLM
Regional Director, Region Five (2)

History
Mr. Harrison
Mr. Buschman

SSwenson:FEHarrison:hj(3/12/62)