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HISTORIC SITE

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETIETH CONGRESS

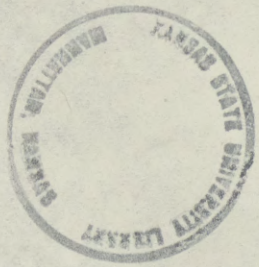
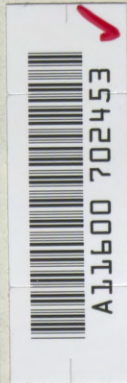
FIRST SESSION

ON

S. 1161

A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 20, 1967



Printed for the use of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs

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WASHINGTON : 1967

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HISTORIC SITE
JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

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HEARING

MEMORANDUM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

HENRY M. JACKSON, Washington, *Chairman*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
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| ALAN BIBLE, Nevada | GORDON ALLOTT, Colorado |
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| GEORGE McGOVERN, South Dakota | |
| GAYLORD NELSON, Wisconsin | |
| LEE METCALF, Montana | |

JERRY T. VERKLER, *Staff Director*
STEWART FRENCH, *Chief Counsel*
E. LEWIS REID, *Minority Counsel*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

ALAN BIBLE, Nevada, *Chairman*

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| HENRY M. JACKSON, Washington | CLIFFORD P. HANSEN, Wyoming |
| CLINTON P. ANDERSON, New Mexico | THOMAS H. KUCHEL, California |
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JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY HISTORIC SITE

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 1967

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 o'clock a.m., in room 3110, New Senate Office Building, Senator Henry M. Jackson (chairman of the full committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Jackson, Hansen, and Metcalf.

Also present: Jerry T. Verkler, staff director; Roy Whitacre and R. K. Griswold, professional staff members; and E. Lewis Reid, minority counsel.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

The purpose of the hearing this morning is to take testimony on S. 1161, a bill to establish the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire all right, title, and interest in and to such lands or interests in lands as he deems necessary for establishing the birthplace of the late President Kennedy as a national historic site.

The property is in Brookline, Mass., and, as described in the bill, is located at 83 Beals Street in a residential neighborhood. The house at this address, which was built in 1908 or early 1909, was the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy on May 29, 1917. The house is a substantial two story structure and occupies a lot containing 3,820 square feet. The property is presently owned by a member of the Kennedy family. It is the understanding of the Chair that the property is to be restored and furnished as it was in 1917 and then donated to the United States of America.

Without objection, the bill and the appropriate letters from the departments will be included at this point in the record.

(The data referred to follow:)

[S. 1161, 90th Cong., first Sess.]

A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in order to preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire by purchase, donation, or otherwise all right, title, and interest in and to such lands, or interests therein (including scenic easements), together with any improvements thereon, as the Secretary of the Interior may deem necessary for the purpose of establishing the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy as a national historic site. The acquisition shall include, but not be limited to, the property in the town of Brookline, County of Norfolk, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with the improvements

thereon, situated on Beals Street, being shown on a plan entitled "Subdivision lot 47 Plan Beals' Estate, Brookline, October 1897, Joseph R. Carr, C.E." recorded with Norfolk Deeds, book 1080, page 461, and bounded and described as follows:

northwesterly by Beals Street, 50 feet;
 northeasterly by lot 50 on plan recorded with said deeds at the end of book 800, 72.46 feet;
 southeasterly by lot 48 on said last mentioned plan, 50.51 feet; and
 southwesterly by a part of lot 47 on said last mentioned plan conveyed by Robert M. Goode to Estille C. Ralph, by deed recorded with said deeds, book 1092, page 53, 80.33 feet,

such property being the birthplace of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

SEC. 2. The properties or interests therein acquired under the provisions of this Act shall be designated by the Secretary of the Interior by publication in the Federal Register as the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site.

SEC. 3. The Secretary shall administer the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site in accordance with the Act approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and the Act approved August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666), as amended.

SEC. 4. The National Park Service of the Department of the Interior is hereby authorized to conduct a study to develop a suitable plan for the operation and maintenance of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site as provided in this Act.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
 BUREAU OF THE BUDGET,
 Washington, D.C., March 17, 1967.

HON. HENRY M. JACKSON,
 Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
 U.S. Senate, Senate Office Building,
 Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in reply to your request of March 6, 1967, for the views of the Bureau of the Budget on S. 1161, "To establish the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

The report which the Secretary of the Interior is submitting describes the site and suggests two amendments to the bill.

If amended as suggested, the Bureau of the Budget would concur with the Department of the Interior in recommending the enactment of S. 1161.

Sincerely yours,

WILFRED H. ROMMEL,
 Assistant Director for Legislative Reference.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
 Washington, D.C., March 17, 1967.

HON. HENRY M. JACKSON,
 Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
 U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR JACKSON: Your Committee has requested a report on S. 1161, a bill "To establish the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

We recommend the enactment of the bill. Two perfecting amendments are suggested below for the consideration of the Committee.

The bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire all right, title, and interest in and to such lands or interests in lands as he deems necessary for establishing the birthplace of the late President Kennedy as a national historic site. The bill provides that such acquisition shall include, but not be limited to, certain property located on Beals Street in Brookline, Massachusetts. The Secretary of the Interior will administer the national historic site in accordance with the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1-4), as amended and supplemented, and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666).

The property in Brookline, Massachusetts, described in the bill is located at 83 Beals Street in a residential neighborhood. The house at this address, which was built in 1908 or early 1909, was the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy

on May 29, 1917. The house is a substantial two-story structure and occupies a lot containing 3,820 square feet. The property is owned by the Kennedy family.

The proposal to establish the property as a national historic site has not yet been considered by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, but the proposal is on the Board's agenda for consideration at its 56th meeting in April of this year. The Advisory Board has recognized the historical significance of the property, however, and upon its recommendation the Secretary of the Interior designated the property as a national landmark on May 29, 1965.

The Kennedy family has generously offered to refurbish the house in the style of the period of their occupancy and to donate the property to the United States for operation as a national historic site. No additional property is proposed to be acquired for the Site.

We estimate that the cost of operating the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site will be approximately \$32,500 per year.

Section 2 of the bill requires publication in the *Federal Register* of notice of the designation of the national historic site. This provision is not needed because section 1 of the bill already provides for establishment of the national historic site. A further publication in the *Federal Register* would serve no useful purpose, and the requirement could appropriately be deleted.

Section 4 of the bill authorizes the National Park Service to conduct a study to develop a suitable plan for the administration of the Site. This provision also is not needed and could appropriately be deleted because the Secretary has adequate authority to make such study.

If the section is retained in the bill, the Secretary of the Interior rather than the National Park Service should be named to make the study, in accordance with the Hoover Commission reports and subsequent reorganization plans that place in the head of the agency full responsibility for the functions of the bureaus in that agency.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

STEWART L. UDALL,
Secretary of the Interior.

The CHAIRMAN. We are delighted to have the Secretary of the Interior here this morning, accompanied by the Director of the National Park Service and others.

Mr. Secretary, we will be pleased to have your statement at this time.

STATEMENT OF HON. STEWART L. UDALL, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, ACCOMPANIED BY GEORGE B. HARTZOG, JR., DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, FRANK E. HARRISON, ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR FOR LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS, AND EDWIN W. SMALL, PROJECT COORDINATOR, BOSTON NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GROUP

Secretary UDALL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have a statement which is brief.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the 35th President of the United States. He was born on May 29, 1917, at 83 Beals Street in Brookline, just outside of Boston, Mass. The bill before you today, S. 1161, would establish his birthplace as the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site. There is no need to comment further before this committee on the role which history has destined the late President to play in the annals of the United States. For contemporaries, the Kennedy birthplace will have even greater significance.

The residence at 83 Beals Street was built about 1908 and purchased by Joseph P. Kennedy on August 20, 1914. This was the home that Joseph P. Kennedy and his wife first lived in after their marriage.

The Kennedy family lived there until about 1920, when the house was sold. For about the first three and a half years of his life, the future President lived at his birthplace. This property—comprising a substantial nine-room two-story frame structure occupying a lot of less than 4,000-square feet—was reacquired and is presently owned by the Kennedy family. And I am told that the condition of the building, its architecture, and everything, is in almost the identical condition as it was when the Kennedy family lived there.

I have a book that I would like to show the committee to illustrate the nature of the building and the neighborhood.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, that will be helpful. Just pass it around.

Secretary UDALL. I received a letter from the President's mother, Mrs. Rose Kennedy—I have a copy attached—stating that the family stands ready to donate this property to the United States for a national historic site.

And we also have a deed in hand so that the transaction can be consummated at the right time.

I would like to say, too, that the country is most fortunate—and this is probably a singular thing in our history—that the President's mother, who of course has a complete remembrance of the house, its interior, its decorations, its furniture, is presently restoring it to the original condition. And this is, of course, a very fine thing that this can be done, that there is someone who has a complete recall as to the details of the interior of the house.

Mr. Chairman, the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments has recognized the historical significance of this property and upon its recommendations the Secretary of the Interior designated it as a registered national historic landmark; it was so dedicated on May 29, 1965. The Department now heartily endorses and supports this legislation to preserve the Kennedy birthplace as a national historic site which will be administered by it through the National Park Service. Visitors to this proposed national historic site, which is located in a residential neighborhood, will be able to park their cars along Beals Street or in one of the three municipal parking lots located within easy walking distance.

The birthplaces of five of the 36 men who have served as Presidents of the United States are administered by the National Park Service. These are: The site of George Washington's birthplace in Virginia, established as the George Washington Birthplace National Monument in 1930; the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, designated in Hyde Park, New York, in 1944; the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, established in Kentucky in 1949; the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, established in New York City in 1953, and of course this was maintained by a private organization and foundation, as was Sagamore Hill, and the members of this committee brought it into the National Park System in 1963, and the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, marking the birthplace of the 29th President in Iowa, authorized on August 12, 1965. The birthplaces of 13 other Presidents of the United States are in State, local government, foundation, or institutional ownership.

It is now most fitting that the Congress enact S. 1161 authorizing the establishment of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site in Brookline, Mass., in commemoration of our 35th President.

Again, we urge establishment of this national historic site. The

cost is minimal due to the generosity of the Kennedy family, but the historical contribution for succeeding generations is great.

(The letter referred to follows:)

NORTH OCEAN BOULEVARD,
Palm Beach, Fla., March 15, 1967.

HON. STEWART L. UDALL,
Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: May I extend my sincere thanks to you for your interest in the birthplace of my late son, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

When the President was born in 1917, we were living in Brookline, Massachusetts, a small town adjacent to Boston.

In recent years, I have realized that this house, because it was a birthplace of a President of the United States, is of historic value to the American people, as are the homes of all our Presidents. For this reason, my family and I have repurchased the house; and the title has been put in the name of my nephew, Joseph Gargan, of Milton, Massachusetts. I have refurnished it the way it was when my son was born. I hope that the house can be preserved just as have been the homes of so many other Presidents.

The work of restoration will soon be completed. It is our intention and hope to make a gift of this home to the American people so that future generations will be able to visit it and see how people lived in 1917 and thus get a better appreciation of the history of this wonderful country.

I understand that, under the laws relating to national historic sites, your department has the authority to keep a birthplace such as this open so that the public can see it.

I hope that the necessary legislation can be passed to allow the government to accept this home as a donation from the Kennedy family.

Very sincerely,

(Signed) Rose Kennedy
Mrs. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY.

Secretary UDALL. I would merely like to add one other fact, Mr. Chairman, to put this in proper perspective. I think when one looks at our Presidents and their place in history there are, one might say, four places that possibly could be of significance to history and to the future: a birthplace; a place that is normally the residence in the later years, or is the main place where a person resided in his mature life; a burial place; and then more recently we have been establishing, of course, the libraries of the Presidents as important historic places. In President Kennedy's case, because of his tragic and untimely death, there will never be a place of his later years. So that the burial place here in Washington that will be finished later this year will be a place associated with his name and memory, and his birthplace is the only other place. This is the reason that we think it is most significant that this be preserved, since it is in a fine state of preservation, as the family themselves are, with loving care, restoring it, and since the cost of maintaining it and interpreting it will be a very modest one. We think that this certainly makes a great deal of sense in terms of the Nation and its historic preservation program.

Thank you, very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your fine statement.

As I understand it, the policy of our Government, where a request has been made by either the family or by a foundation, is to accept donations of such a property and then administer it as a national historic site. There has been no uniform policy in this regard. In the case of the families of some of the previous Presidents, the properties have been left to the community or the State or some private society or foundation. Is that a fair statement?

Secretary UDALL. I think that is a very good statement, Senator, of the pattern that has been developed. Some of the finest historic places—Mount Vernon is the most notable one, and the Hermitage—are maintained by non-Federal Government associations or foundations and are kept extremely well. Undoubtedly many of the birthplaces of Presidents were destroyed and are no longer in existence. I dare say, without knowing all of the history, that probably over half of the birthplaces were not saved in time. In fact, in the early period of our history, we made a lot of history before we realized that our history, and historical places, would be so important to us. So that those places and historic sites that have come into the National Trust are those where there were special circumstances which made it logical, and an opportune time for bringing them into the National Park System. It would not surprise me in the future if some of these other birthplaces that are presently maintained by private, State or local auspices, might also come into the National Trust if that is desired.

The CHAIRMAN. The requirement that Congress apparently has followed is that the family, or the foundation acting for the family, makes a donation of the property intact. Then the Federal Government assumes the responsibility of maintaining the site and the property.

Secretary UDALL. This is the pattern, Senator. This was true, as the committee well knows, with the Theodore Roosevelt birthplace. In that sense we were very lucky. We got Sagamore Hill and his great home in Oyster Bay at the same time, and both of them were a gift by the Theodore Roosevelt Association.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Metcalf.

Senator METCALF. Do you propose to charge admission to this John F. Kennedy Historic Site?

Secretary UDALL. Senator, I think all we can say at this time is that whatever the general pattern is with regard to historic sites, that this would fall into that pattern. Maybe Director Hartzog can answer what our present practice is with regard to Hyde Park or the other historic places.

He says that under the pattern that we are following there would ultimately be a modest charge of some kind.

Senator METCALF. This would come under the Land and Water Conservation Fund?

Secretary UDALL. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. What is the fee, Director Hartzog?

Mr. HARTZOG. The minimum fee now, sir, is 50 cents.

Senator METCALF. The other day I visited the Old Stone House over in Georgetown. I was impressed by the fact that you did not charge admission. And those young ladies from Arlington and Alexandria, and the Girl Scouts, or whoever they were, were very gracious hostesses. I considered it a very fine example of administration.

Mr. HARTZOG. These places where we are not charging admission are being evaluated in the light of the Land and Water Conservation Fund; in some instances the cost of collection would exceed what we would get out of them, and in those cases we don't charge admission.

Senator METCALF. As a matter of fact, this would probably be self-sustaining and self-supporting.

Mr. HARTZOG. It would go a long way toward it.

Senator METCALF. Particularly if \$32,500 would be the total annual cost.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hansen.

Senator HANSEN. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We appreciate your appearance here this morning, and we are delighted to have your testimony.

Senator Cooper, we would be delighted to have your statement at this time.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN SHERMAN COOPER, A U.S. SENATOR
FROM THE STATE OF KENTUCKY**

Senator COOPER. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my statement will be short.

Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to introduce with you S. 1161, a bill to establish the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The late President Kennedy was born at 83 Beals Street in Brookline, Mass., and lived there during the first 3 years of his life. The property is now owned by members of his family. S. 1161 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire this property and to maintain it as a national historic site with access to the public.

It is my understanding that the family of the late President will make a gift of the property to the Federal Government and restore it in a manner appropriate to the period.

The birthplaces of 18 Presidents of the United States are held in National, State, local, or foundation ownership. With the destruction of historic sites, which is becoming characteristic of our time, it is of the utmost importance that the birthplaces of our Presidents be preserved as significant historic sites.

It is appropriate that the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who had such a sense of history, should be preserved by our Nation. He brought hope to the people of our country and the peoples throughout the world.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cooper. I am pleased to cosponsor this bill with you. We appreciate having your statement.

Does anyone have any questions of Senator Cooper?

Senator METCALF. Senator Cooper, I commend you and our chairman for promptly bringing to the attention of this committee this unique opportunity to get a birthplace of a President, restored by the memory of people who are still alive, to be donated to the Government of the United States. This is, I think, one of those rare occasions when we should move quickly. You have done well to call it to our attention.

Senator COOPER. Thank you very much.

I have left out the fact that many of us had the opportunity of serving with him in the Senate and the House. But this bill goes beyond just our association with him. We need to preserve the birthplace of our Presidents. And I know that now we seem to be tearing down every place that has any historic association. I think it very appropriate that we start making better effort toward the birthplace of the late President Kennedy, who had a great sense of history.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The Chair wishes to announce that we will include at this point in the record the very fine memorandum from R. K. (Mike) Griswold on the subject of Federal activity in administering the birthplaces of our past Presidents. I think it is useful to have it for the record.

(The memorandum referred to follows:)

MEMORANDUM

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS,
March 16, 1967.

To: Jerry Verkler.

From: R. K. (Mike) Griswold.

Subject: Federal Areas Commemorating the Birthplaces of Presidents of the United States.

A study of the practices followed in identifying and preserving the birthplaces of the 35 men who have become Presidents of the United States shows such diverse methods used that few statements of past policy would be all-inclusive.

Of the 35 men, only five have Federally-owned and administered birthplace sites. These five are Washington, Lincoln, the two Roosevelts and Herbert Hoover. A greater number have been commemorated by preserving a home used later in life; particularly a home in which the man lived during his active public life.

Prime examples of this type of site are Mount Vernon (Washington), Monticello (Jefferson), and the Hermitage (Jackson). It may be significant that even these three famous historic sites are owned and administered by non-Federal bodies in most cases foundations.

When one considers only the Federally-owned and administered birthplaces, a distinct pattern is readily apparent. The birthplace sites have been, or are intended to be, donated by either foundations, the late president's families, or combinations thereof. I list below the five Federal sites and the donations involved.

1. *George Washington Birthplace National Monument*.—Established January 23, 1930. The lands at "Wakefield," Washington's birthplace, were donated to the United States by the Wakefield Foundation.

Further donation, primarily of the burial grounds, was from the Washington family.

2. *Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site*.—Established July 17, 1916. The lands were donated by the Lincoln Farm Association by a deed conveyed to the United States on April 11, 1916. In addition, the Lincoln Farm Association also donated an endowment fund of \$50,000.

3. *Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site*.—Established July 15, 1963. The home was donated to the United States by the T. R. Foundation.

4. *Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site*.—Established January 15, 1944. The acceptance of Hyde Park Estate was authorized by a Joint Resolution of Congress on July 18, 1939, the site was designated on January 15, 1944, and the United States accepted full title from the family on November 21, 1945.

5. *Herbert Hoover Birthplace National Historic Site*.—Established by an act of Congress in 1965. The hearing record discloses that the Herbert Hoover Foundation expected to donate the properties it owns to the United States. As of this writing the conveyance has not taken place.

If past practices are accepted as the genesis of policy for commemorating former Presidents by preserving their birthplaces, that policy would be as follows:

"The National Park Service will maintain and operate as a National Historic Site¹ the birthplace of any former President of the United States, provided:

1. The building (and its surroundings) in which the former President was born exists² in a state of preservation or restoration which is somewhat indicative of the conditions at the time of birth, and,

¹ One criterion for National Historic Site status for a birthplace is that the person commemorated was of particular importance in the history of our nation. The fact that a man rose to the Presidency can be considered *prima facie* evidence of that historical importance.

² The one exception to this principle has been the Abraham Lincoln birthplace. The cabin in which Mr. Lincoln was born had long been removed from the site when it became a Federal property.

2. Such edifice is donated, along with the appurtenant furnishings, grounds, etc. forming the basic elements of the site, to the United States."

The CHAIRMAN. There being no further questions, the hearing is closed.

(Thereupon, at 10 a.m., the hearing was concluded.)

○

Each side is allowed to make such evidence as it may see fit to introduce, and the court will determine the facts of the case, to the effect of the law.

The Court: There being no further questions, the hearing is closed.
(Thereupon, at 10 and the hearing was concluded.)

C