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A REPORT ON POPULATION TRENDS: 1970-1973

Massachusetts Department of Correction

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Commissioner

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents population trends for the state correctional facilities (excluding Bridgewater), for the years 1970 through 1972. The data is presented in graphs based on the average population by months for the total population and for each facility.

1. TOTAL POPULATION

Graph 1 indicates that there has been a substantial amount of fluctuation in the overall population during the three years. For example, from January to July, 1971, the population rose from 2132 to 2379 - an average increase of about 41 residents a month, or an overall increase of 12% during this period.

The population remained fairly stable at this relatively high level from July, 1971, to July, 1972. Then, from July to December a dramatic reduction in the population occurred. The total population decreased from 2325 in July to 1943 in December - an average decrease of about 76 residents per month, or an overall decrease of 16% during this period.

It is interesting that, despite substantial fluctuations over the three years, the average population for December, 1972, (which was 1943) was not very different from that of January, 1970, (which was 2034). Overall, there was a reduction of 4% from the beginning of 1970 to the end of 1972.

2. MCI-Walpole

The population trends for MCI-Walpole are presented in Graph 2. As this graph indicates, the population at Walpole remained fairly stable over the three years.

3. MCI-Concord

Unlike Walpole, the population trends at Concord were clearly not stable. As Graph 3 indicates, the Concord population rose rather steadily during 1970 and rose dramatically during 1971. For example, from January to July, 1971, the population increased from 492 to 680 - an average increase of about 31 residents a month, or an overall increase of 38% during this period.

The overall increase in the Concord population could be attributed, in large measure, to striking increases in two categories of offenders-i.e., drug and drug related offenders and first offenders. An earlier study, which was concerned with approximately the same time period under consideration here, indicated that there had been a 252% increase in the number of drug and drug related commitments to Concord and a 133% increase in the number of first offenders committed to Concord.

The population at Concord remained at a very high level until it reached its peak at 689 in July, 1972. From July to December the population decreased dramatically, reaching a low point of 431. This represents an average decrease of 52 residents a month, or an overall decrease of 37% during this period. This dramatic reduction in the population at Concord allowed the Department of Correction to close down the archaic East Wing of the institution on January 22, 1973.

An important factor underlying the striking reduction in the population at Concord was the establishment of community based alternatives to incarceration, such as the Boston Pre-Release Center, the Shirley Pre-Release Center, and Halfway houses operated by private agencies under contract to the Department. As the number of community based facilities and programs continues to grow, it is expected that the populations of other institutions can be similarly reduced.

4. MCI-Norfolk

In Graph 4 the population trends at Norfolk are presented. This graph indicates that there has been a general trend downward in the Norfolk population from July, 1971, when the population was 790, to December, 1972, when the population was 622. This reduction of 168 residents over the year-and-a-half period represents a drop of 21%.

5. Forestry Camps

The population of the three forestry camps - Plymouth, Warwick, and Monroe - have been combined in Graph 5. This graph indicates that the camp population trends were pretty stable, with the camps operating at or near their total capacity of 150 residents.

6. MCI-Framingham

Graph 6 indicates that the population trends at Framingham have been relatively stable however, from June to December, 1972, the population dropped from 127 to 90 - a decrease of 29%. In December, 1972, the population was below 100 for the first time in over four years.

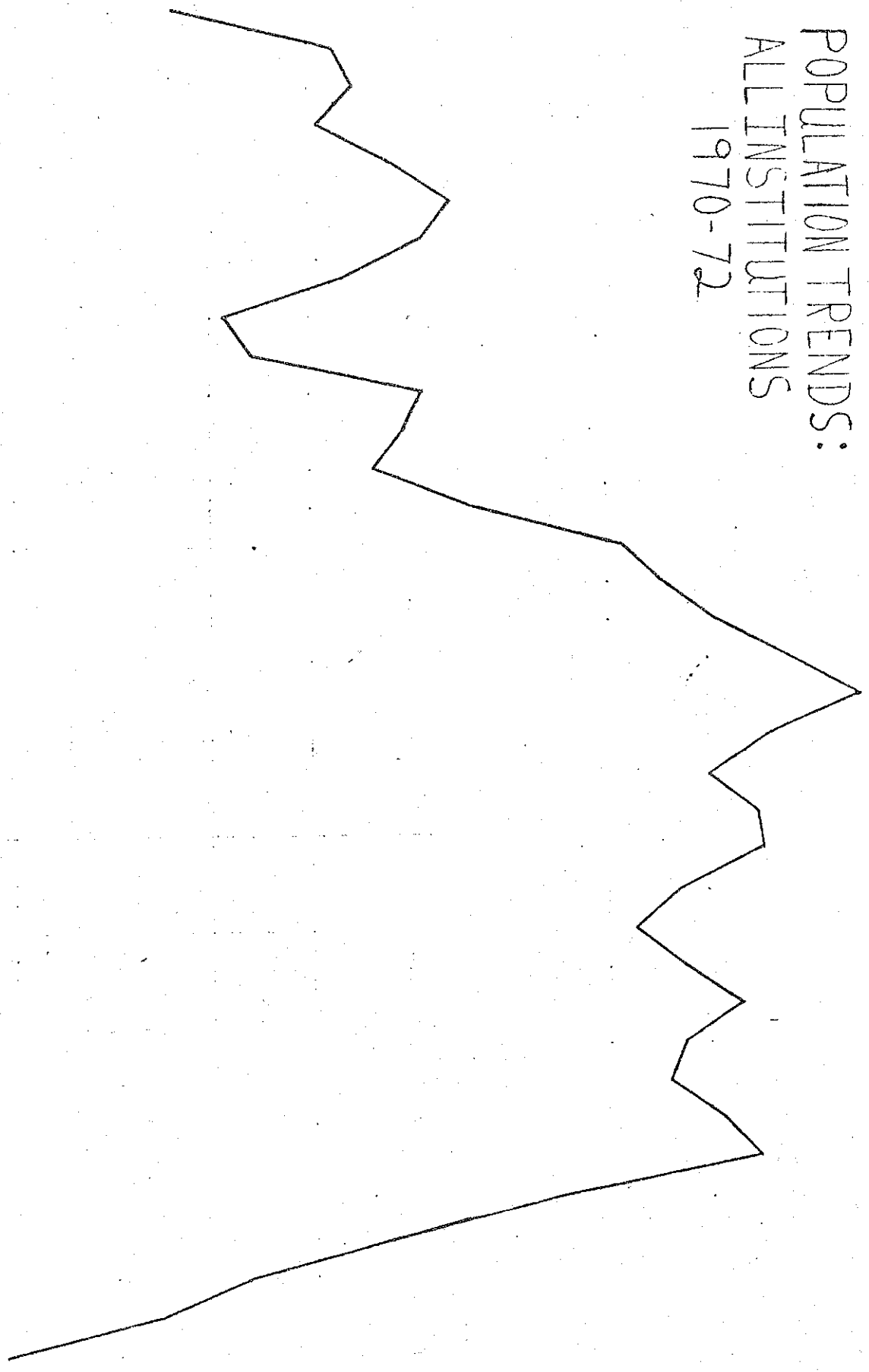
In summary, there has been a significant reduction in the institutional population of the Department of Correction during the last six months of 1972. This population reduction was most striking at Concord, but it was also clearly in evidence at Norfolk and Framingham. At Walpole and at the forestry camps the populations have remained fairly stable. As the Department continues to develop a network of community correctional facilities and programs, it is expected that the trend downward in institutional populations will continue.

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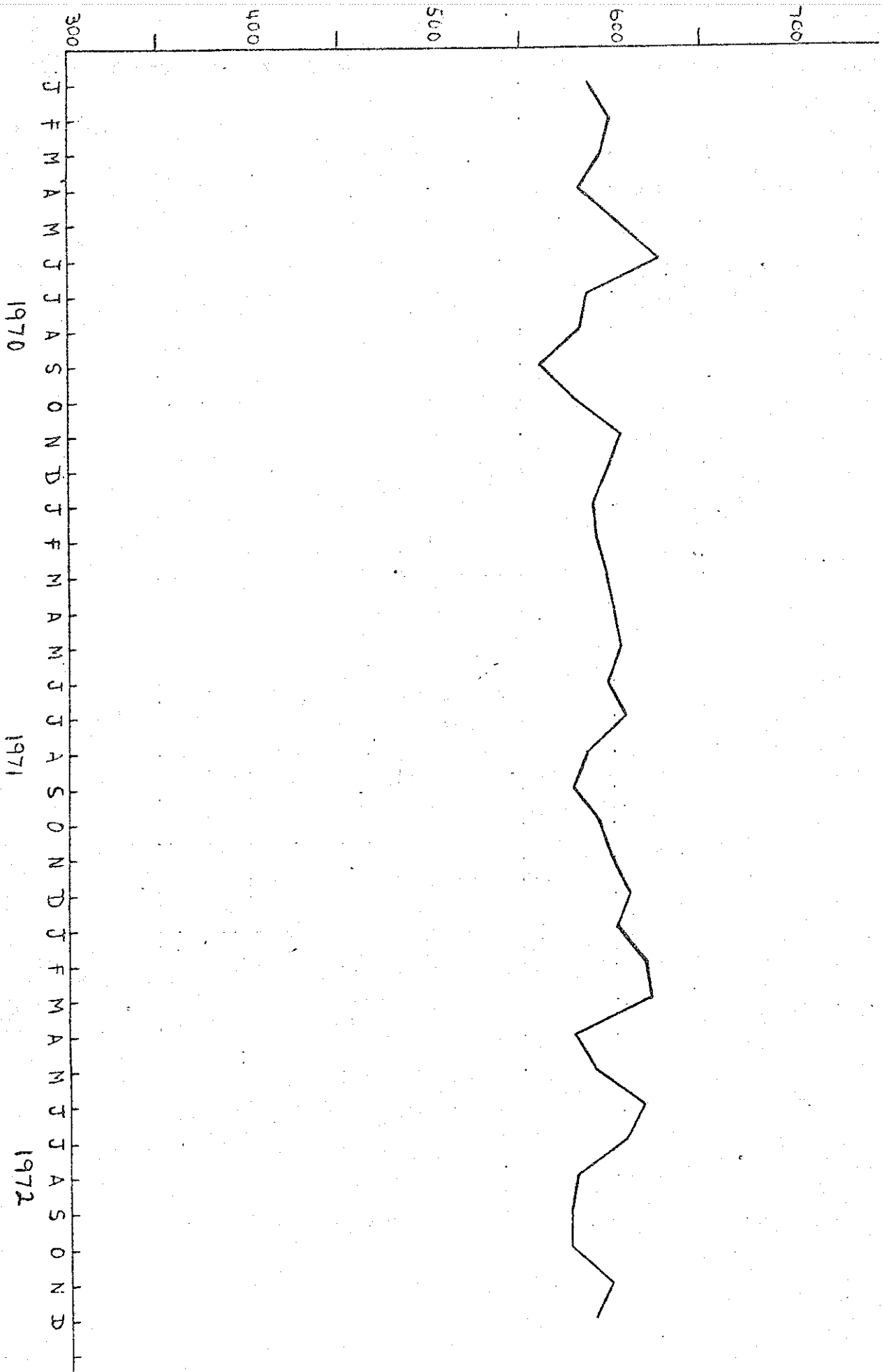
I. POPULATION TRENDS: ALL INSTITUTIONS 1970-72

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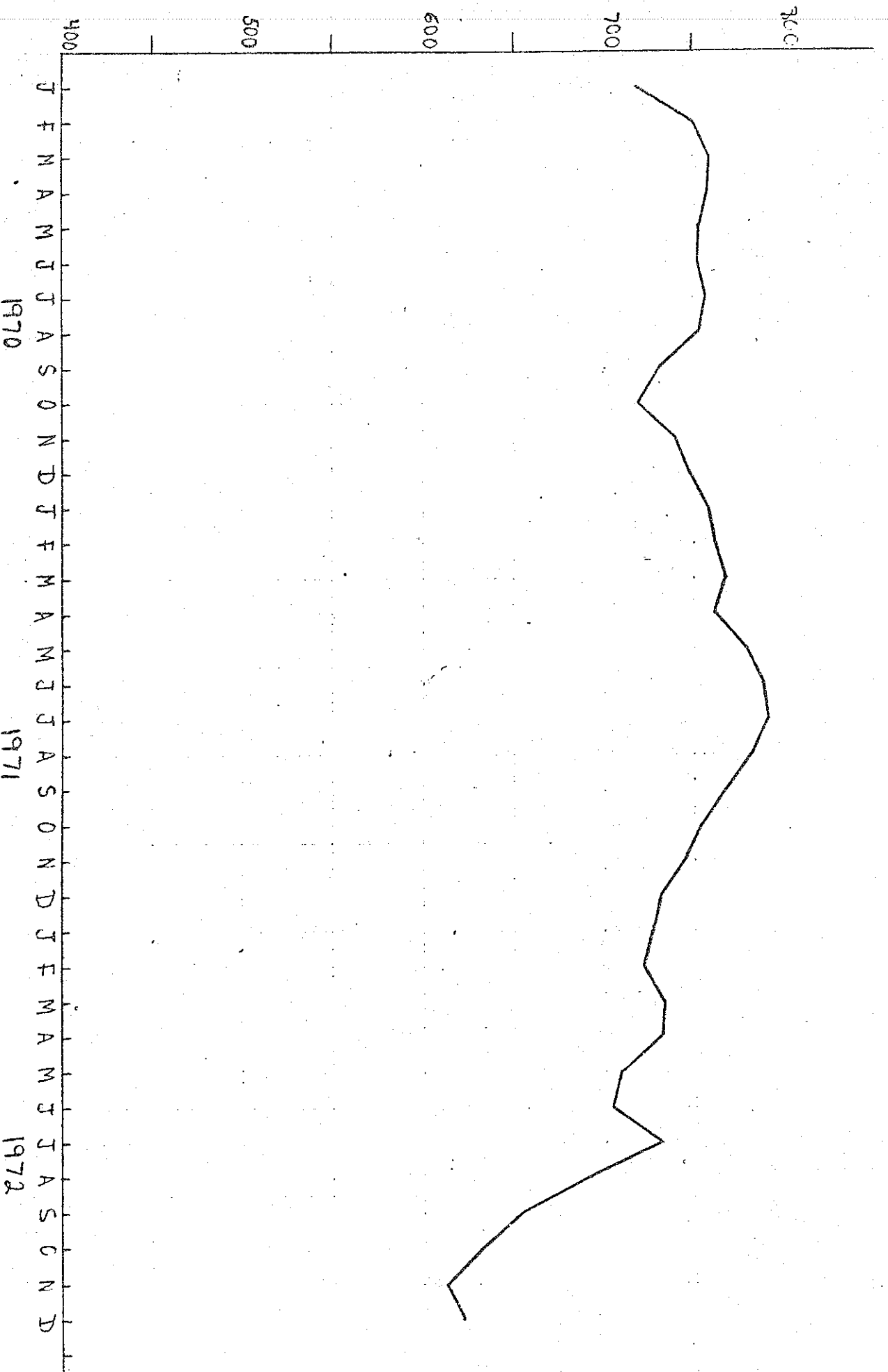
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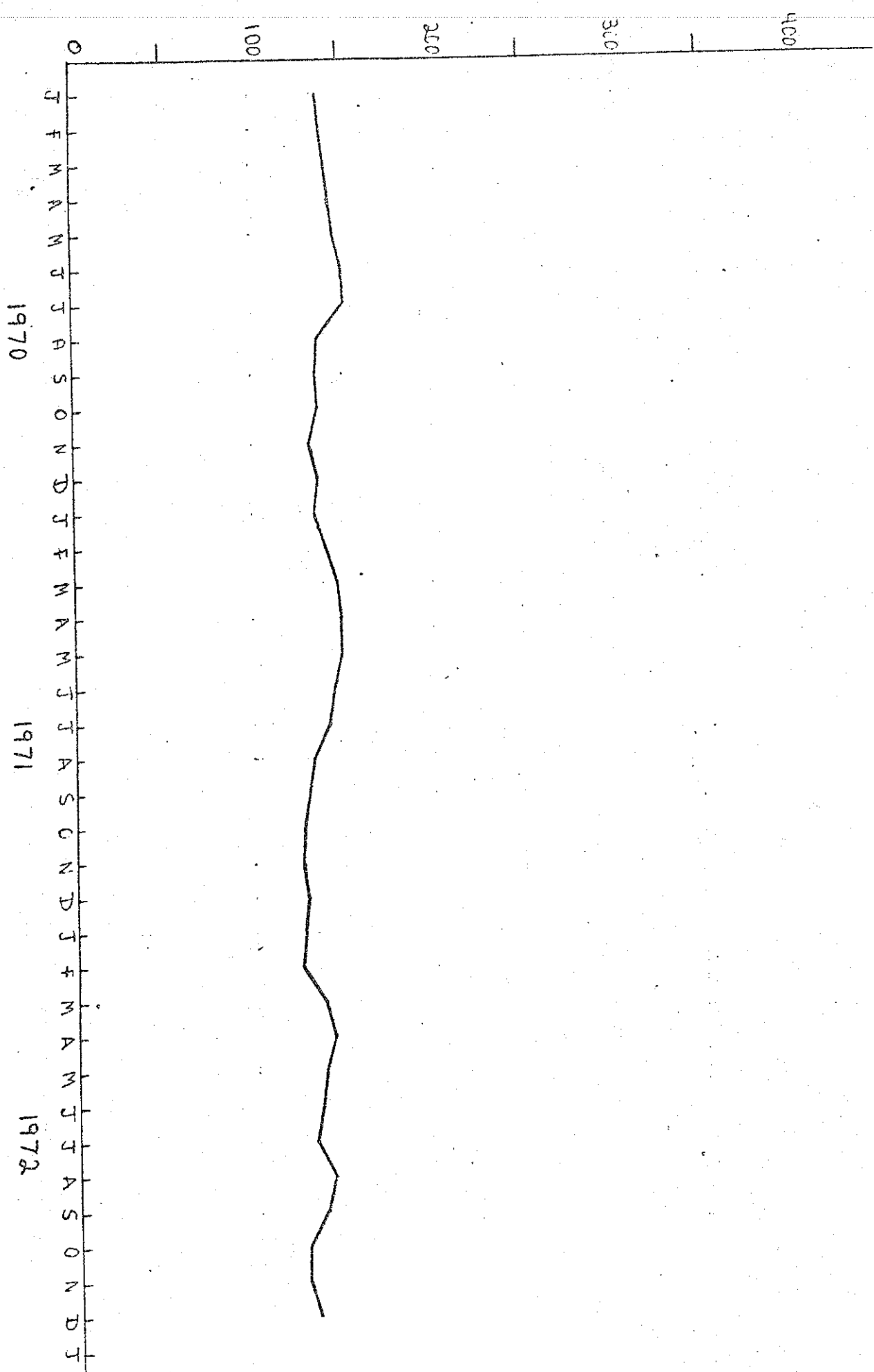
2. POPULATION TRENDS: MCI WALPOLE (1970-72)



4. POPULATION TRENDS: MCI NORFOLK (1970-72)



5. POPULATION TRENDS: MCI FORESTRY (1970-72)



6. POPULATION TRENDS: MCI FRANKHAM (1970-72)

