

NO COMMENT ON TRIAL

Juror 'Glad to Be Home'

By DON MILLSAP

"I'm very glad to be home," commented Mrs. Mildred McCollum Saturday afternoon as she enjoyed a happy reunion with her family and friends whom she had not seen for three weeks.

Mrs. McCollum, along with 11 other jurors in Judge Joe B. Brown's Criminal District Court, only a few hours earlier had sentenced Jack Ruby to death in the electric chair for the murder of accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

Although she would make no comments about the trial itself or on the jury's verdict or deliberation, Mrs. McCollum did talk freely with reporters about the long separation from the outside world.

"The worst part was not seeing any of my family or friends," said the 40-year-old mother of six children who chose not to use her family as a reason to be excused from jury duty.

"WE DIDN'T KNOW anything that was going on in the world outside the courthouse," she said.

She admitted that jurors got to see some part of the newspapers but mainly just "the funnies and the classified advertising section," because news of the trial was spread throughout other sections.

"They did let us watch some television. But a bailiff was always there to see that we turned the set off when the news came on," she said. "The only news we saw at all was a couple of weather forecasts."

Even without the news, jurors did not have free use of the television set.

"There were a lot of programs and old movies that they wouldn't let us see," she reported. "These were programs like The Defenders, Sam Benedict or Perry Mason which deal with court trials."

HOW DID JURORS spend their out-of-courtroom time?

"One man had a record player and we listened to plenty of mu-

sic," she said. "And we played cards, dominos and many other kinds of games."

Jurors who preferred to read, she said, were limited to selected books and magazines which had been carefully censored to eliminate any mention of the trial, Jack Ruby, chief defense counsel Melvin Belli, or the murder of President Kennedy.

"We were completely cut off from the outside world," Mrs. McCollum said again. "I didn't even know about the jailbreak until after the verdict had been read this morning."

(Seven prisoners created a near riot outside the courtroom Feb. 6 when they broke out of the Dallas County jail using a fake gun and razor blades. One was recaptured on the second floor near the courtroom, and another just outside the building moments later.)

Mrs. McCollum, who normally works as a bookkeeper-secretary for the Alabama Construction Co., said she hopes to



-Dallas News Staff Photo.

Mrs. Mildred McCollum, center, talks with her family Saturday. With her are her daughter Marcia, 10, son Neal, 13, and Drexel McCollum.

go through back issues of newspapers to read about the break and running accounts of the Ruby trial.

"I DID ACCOMPLISH one thing during the three weeks we were locked up," she said. "I managed to figure my income tax."

When asked about the jury deliberations Saturday morning, she replied: "I don't think I should make any comment about the trial."

"But it was interesting to listen to such famous doctors who testified."

The medical and psychiatric testimony created no problem for her. "I had no trouble understanding what they (the doctors) said. Oh, once in awhile they would use some words we didn't know, but they always took time to explain them," she reported.

Mrs. McCollum had high praise for her fellow jurists and bailiffs Nell Tyler and Bo Mabarra, saying, "I couldn't hope to

meet 13 nicer or more cooperative persons. Everyone got along well together. It just couldn't have been nicer."

AS SHE TALKED WITH reporters, her husband, Drexel McCollum who works as a machinist, added, "It's nice to have her home again. We got along fine, but not as well as we would with her here."

Mrs. McCollum admitted she was a little tired after Friday night's long session, but that she was most tired from "just sitting."

"I'm used to a more active life. We got plenty of rest at the courthouse, normally retiring about 10 p.m. unless there was a late movie we wanted to see."

What are her plans? "I really don't know," she answered. "I haven't had chance to talk with my family about it. I guess I will just try to find out what has been happening since I was selected a juror."