

The Nixons: Refurbishing the White

By Maxine Cheshire

A total of \$3,328,418 was spent to refurbish both public and private rooms at the White House during the 5½ years Richard Nixon was President, according to a report released yesterday by the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.

Stating specifically that "no federal funds were spent," the report identifies the sources of the expenditures as contributions totaling \$3,534,080 from the White House Historical Association, private foundations and individuals.

Of the contributions, the historical association provided \$1,636,835 through sales of White House guide books and from royalties on the sales of commemorative plates and medals depicting United States Presidents

and First Ladies, which the Franklin Mint designed and marketed.

Another \$1,897,245 was donated by foundations and individuals, some of whom were among former President Nixon's most generous political contributors during his White House years.

In sheer numbers, the 252 pieces of furniture and 142 decorative art objects include four antique beds, 99 chairs, 13 settees, 73 tables, seven desks, 17 mirrors and 11 clocks.

In addition, the White House committee acquired 61 paintings and drawings, 48 prints of the Executive Mansion, 21 chandeliers and 28 period rugs.

Many of the acquisitions were outright gifts, the values of which have not been made public.

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House for \$3 Million

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A breakdown of the expenditures includes:

- At least \$43,800 in redecorating Nixon's bedroom, with new furnishings that included a \$5,000 antique canopy bed and a \$450 set of box springs, \$10,700 worth Kerman rug, a pair of \$10,000 Hong paintings of Admiral of window curtains and bed-hangings, an \$11,000 antique Perry's fleet and a \$6,800 pair of Chinese Export pistol-handled urns.

- More than \$4,589 spent on new curtains for the presidential suite at Bethesda Naval Hospital at the time Nixon was a patient there in July, 1973.

- A fee of \$18,489 paid to decorator Sarah Jackson Doyle for her work in the second-floor family rooms during the Nixon's first year there, 1969.

- Some \$336,717 spent for drapery and upholstery fabrics, including \$10,643 to curtain the two windows in the upstairs Family Dining Room.

- Some \$34,000 spent to reproduce an antique wallpaper for the Blue Room.

- Some \$198,818 for floor-coverings, including 28 antique rugs and modern carpeting.

The report was compiled "hastily," according to White House Curator Clement E. Conger, and reflects several omissions and errors. A \$5,000 bed, purchased for Nixon, is not listed in the inventory of acquisitions although its purchase was reported by the press in 1973.

Also unlisted is \$15,000 paid to New York artist Aaron

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Refurbishing the White House for \$3 Million

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Shickler for his portrait of former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. On the other hand, Shickler's portrait of President John F. Kennedy appears under 1971 expenditures as \$15,000.

Among Nixon supporters who contributed generously to the White House acquisition fund were Joseph M. Segal, the former Franklin Mint president who gave

\$111,601 to the 1972 CREEP campaign. He donated another \$285,437 to redoing the White House.

Another donor listed in the report is financier John C. Newington, who gave \$142,829 to help reelect Nixon and also gave \$50,000 to the Nixons' decorating projects. Conger, who often has praised Mrs. Nixon for having done more than "any other First Lady" to beau-

tify the White House, said yesterday that private contributions "have dropped off" since her departure.

Described in a press release as "preliminary," the report is the first in the 11-year history of the Committee for the preservation of the White House.

According to committee member Clare Booth Luce, Conger told the group when it met here in March that

President Ford has insisted its activities be made public under the Freedom of Information Act. The committee was created under Executive Order in 1964.

According to Mrs. Luce, Conger "apologized" to the committee for having to make public details of White House acquisitions and expenditures, which previously had been kept "discreetly private."