

1-2-75 (Post)

Frederick Countians agree 3-1 with Watergate jury's verdict

By RONNIE D. SMITH
Staff Writer

Folks in Frederick County apparently agree with the New Year's Day convictions of former U.S. Attorney General John N. Mitchell, ex-presidential aides H.R. Haldeman

and John D. Ehrlichman, and co-defendant, Robert C. Maridan, a random News-Post survey shows.

Though some disagreed, of the 40 citizens polled Sunday night only hours after the guilty verdict was handed down by the Watergate cover-up jury, a ratio of 3-1 were in favor of the convictions.

"I think the jury did a very good job," said Milton A. Sewell of Emmitsburg. "It was the only verdict they could have made." Sewell said, too, that he thought the convictions would hold up in the face of possible appeals. Lawyers for Mitchell and the others said Sunday they would appeal the verdict.

Mrs. Patty W. Masser of Feagaville agreed with Sewell. "I think it came out just as it should have," she said. "The whole shebang (the defendants) was guilty right down the line." Mrs. Masser, who said her husband didn't agree with her on this, added: "They're guilty and now they'll have to take their medicine. I would have been disappointed if it had come out otherwise." Mr. Masser wouldn't comment.

Richard W. Harner, Urbana, disagreed. "I don't think the verdict was a just one," he said. But he agreed with the verdict "in the moral sense," he said. Then he added: "(The defendants) were only following the President's

(Richard M. Nixon's) orders. Let him go to jail; (the defendants) shouldn't have to pay the consequences — they were following his orders." Harner said he was still a "sympathetic supporter" of former President Nixon, however.

A Frederick woman who works for the federal government thought Nixon was the one who should have been judged

See COUNTIANS, page A-6

Countians agree 3 to 1

(Continued From Page A-1)

"guilty." She said: "(The jury) didn't get the right (man). The right (man) was not convicted; Nixon got off scot-free." She added: "They'll (defendants) go to prison and he (Nixon) won't."

Ernest M. Kuehl of Walkersville is glad it's over. "I'm just glad it came to an end," he said. "They got what they deserved — they were guilty." Kuehl added that the President Ford-granted pardon of Nixon probably would be brought up at any ensuing court appeal. "But it won't have any bearing," he said. "I hope not anyway."

Alvin L. Main of Frederick, who hadn't heard of the verdict until contacted by the News-Post, said: "I had the feeling they should have been found guilty." But he said the five defendants were "victims of circumstances." He said they "were trying to protect their boss, Nixon."

Mrs. Joan M. Christy, a Frederick County school teacher, looked to the brighter side of the Watergate affair. She said she hoped the verdict would bring a "new chapter of honesty in government and with people." She said that Nixon's role in the whole affair might never be known. She said that was one of the "saddest" sides of Watergate.

Mrs. Christy said, too, that the American people have become "selfish" and "self-centered." She said that led us to Watergate. "Let's hope this is a new beginning," she added. She looked with "hope" to 1975.

Charles F. Biggs of Frederick had this

reaction to the conviction. "No matter of what political party, if they've done wrong to the government and the people, they should be punished."

Mrs. Hugh K. Byrne of Brunswick said simply: "I think the verdict was right." She was asked why. "The evidence," she said softly, "the evidence."

Some county people had no comment. "I've been hearing so much about it," said Miss H. L. Burke of Frederick, "I'm sick of it." When Frederick's Galen L. Martin was asked if the verdict affected him in any way, he said: "Not really. I had no reaction."

Roy F. Harley Jr. of Frederick had no comment. "I'd rather not say," he responded.

Although Charlie E. Portner of Walkersville said he had not been keeping abreast of the trial, he did have some concern over the Nixon pardon. Portner said, "It doesn't seem right the way Nixon got off and these guys got hung." He added: "The man (Nixon) is guilty and he should pay. I can't see why he should get away while the others are found guilty."

So, as the new year is ushered in, one of this country's most historic scandals ended with the conviction of four of five defendants. To look back on the old year, it probably will be known as the second chapter of Watergate with some chapters yet to be written. But this is 1975. As Mrs. Christy put it: "It's time to look forward to 1975." Look forward, indeed.