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Nixon Dedicates Plaque To His Mother in Indiana

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VERNON, Ind., June 24—President Nixon paid a nostalgic visit today to his mother's birthplace in rural Indiana and used the occasion to exhort several thousand well-wishers to cling to the values that she knew as a Quaker girl around the turn of the century.

The President came here to dedicate a plaque in honor of Mrs. Hannah Milhous Nixon, who was born on a farm on the Rush branch of Graham Creek near this town of 500 people in 1885.

Moving through the countryside, Mr. Nixon found admiring crowds of old and young, the open white faces of Midwestern farm country, and not a single detractor all day.

"My roots are here," the President said with a broad smile as he stood on the steps of the Jennings County Court House, a pleasant old building of brick and gingerbread surrounded by green lawns and the deep shade of maples.

The President came on invitation of the Jennings County High School chapter of the Indiana Junior Historical Society. The students had compiled a history of the Milhous family in this community and erected along Highway 50 a plaque saying:

"Hannah Milhous Nixon, mother of President Richard M. Nixon, was born on a farm four and a half miles southeast to which her grandparents came in 1854. Hannah's parents moved to California when she was 12 years old."

Mr. Nixon was born in Yorba Linda, Calif.

There are no known relatives of the President in the community here, and the old homestead burned to the ground in 1968.

When it was learned that the President would come here for the dedication, the plaque was temporarily moved to the courthouse for the ceremony.

Jennings County is an agricultural community of 19,000 people in southeast Indiana. The President, accompanied by Agriculture Secretary Clifford M. Hardin, arrived by a heli-

copter that set down on the parking lot of the high school at noon and was greeted by a crowd of 700 people waving flags and patriotic banners.

The community newspaper, The North Vernon Plain Dealer, described the visit in a special red, white and blue edition as "the biggest thing that has happened to Jennings since Morgan's Raiders tried unsuccessfully to breach the Union defenses around Vernon back in the Civil War days."

But the newspaper added: "You can also say that there is a lot of political manner to a visit of this nature and the fact that President Nixon is coming to Jennings is sure-fire evidence that he has every intention of running for re-election in 1972 and will be a fighting candidate."

At the courthouse, where the crowds filled the lawns and overflowed into surrounding streets, Mr. Nixon talked of his mother, who died in 1967, and of her love of Indiana, where she had been a member of a Quaker family.

He told the crowd that what he was going to say was "what I think my mother would want me to say."

In addition to being "very proud of your country," he said, "she would also want me to say this group: Keep your religious faith. She would say that religious faith had sustained her through some very difficult times."

"Finally, she would want me to say to you that we in this country should dedicate ourselves to the cause of peace," he added.

Stating that he believed peace for the next generation was possible, the President said:

"We are ending a war in which we are presently engaged. It will end, and it will end in a way that will build a more lasting peace.

"We are attempting to break down the barriers between nations and peoples in the world, but in an open world where they can go to all the nations of the world and know all the people in the world. What a wonderful experience that is."



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NOSTALGIC VISIT: The President spoke at Vernon.