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ART HOPPE



Richard M. (Biff) Nixon

ALADY accuses me of rewriting history to suit my purposes. That's true. My best known work in this field is "A Rewritten History of America."

Perhaps the most interesting chapter deals with one of the most fabulous characters of our rewritten times—Richard M. (Biff) Nixon. Excerpts follow:

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PROBABLY THE turning point in Biff Nixon's career, as he himself admits, was the day he made the Whittier College football team.

Until then, "that Nixon fellow," as he was known to what few acquaintances he had, was a poor, shy, introverted grind, whose idea of a fun time was an evening in the school library doing crossword puzzles.

His chance came in the third football game of the season when the first, second and third string halfbacks broke their legs. "I guess you're all we've got left, Whatsyourname," said the coach to his perennial bench-warmer with a sigh. "You might as well go in. It's hopeless now."

Well, who will ever forget Biff's dazzling runs of 16, 37 and 98 yards for the touchdowns that beat arch-rival, Pismo Beach State in the closing moments? That was the first year he made All-American.

A grateful alumni rewarded him with a Stutz Bearcat, a raccoon coat and silver hip flask. Almost overnight, the quiet, studious loner emerged from his dull chrysalis to become the back-slapping, gregarious, whoop-it-up Biff Nixon. America was to come to love and admire.

Even those around Whittier at that time who never met him held him in life-long esteem. "He almost came to one of our amateur theatricals

once," says Miss Thelma (Pat) Ryan, now a school-teacher in Ely, Nevada. "But he was too busy. You know," she adds with a lingering glance at his picture on her wall, "I always thought I could've made him happy somehow."

But, instead, of course, Biff married the Hollywood queen, Cupcakes de Light, who was his first and fourth wife.

Biff amassed the beginnings of his fortune during his years as a star for the Green Bay Packers. Not only did he endorse Wheaties and razor blades ("Even Biff Nixon gets rid of his Five O'Clock Shadow with Gillette"), but he astutely parlayed his parents' little grocery store into the nationwide chain of Biff Burgers that now graces every Main street.

With the outbreak of World War II, Biff, like many athletes, signed up for P-T boats in the Pacific. It was there he met John F. Kennedy. Kennedy, who was always attracted to athletes, idolized Biff. And after the war there was many a touch football game at Hyannisport and later on the White House lawn.

Though never interested in politics, ("Who's got time for that stuff?" Biff would say, laughing), he got to know many famous political leaders such as the venerable Senator Helen Gahagan Douglas and Secretary of State Alger Hiss.

But there was always a strong religious streak in Biff. And at the peak of his fame and success, he returned to his Quaker upbringing. "A man needs all the Friends he can get," he said with his warm grin.

And so, for the past decade, he has devoted all his time to making pacifist speeches and leading demonstrations against the war in Vietnam.

Thus today, he is respected for his convictions, admired for his compassion and ideals and beloved by all his fellow countrymen.

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WHILE HE never cares much for watching football on television, he still holds a warm spot in his heart for the sport.

"After all," he is fond of saying with a nostalgic smile, "where would I be today if I hadn't made the team at Whittier?"