

The Empty White House

Washington

The nation's new first family likes the White House, but won't be living there for several days.

Betty Ford, who said she was numbed by the turmoil of the past few days, was asked when the family would move into the executive mansion vacated by the Nixons only hours before.

"I would hesitate to say," she replied. "I haven't really thought about it."

Later she told a friend in the receiving line in the ornate East Room that before the family moves "I have to get organized first. I was organized in the other direction."

The Fords had planned to move this fall into the house formerly set aside for the commander of naval operations, on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory in

the northwest section of the District of Columbia.

Mrs. Ford had spent a great deal of time in recent weeks selecting furnishings for the ancient, barn-like structure, which Congress recently earmarked as a permanent vice presidential residence. Now she must leave that task to the wife of the next vice president, and instead plan a move to the family quarters on the third floor of the historic building at 1600 Pennsylvania avenue.

The four Ford youngsters, hurriedly assembled to see their father sworn in as the 38th U.S. president, described her as holding up well despite being "an emotional person" who is "quite tense about the entire situation."

Steve, the youngest son, said, "I think she's doing really well . . . these first few-weeks are going to be very tough, but we did the

same thing ten months ago. I guess you just adjust."

The oldest son Michael, 24, and his blonde bride Gayle had moving problems of their own. They have rented a house near Michael's seminary in Massachusetts, and were ready to move when they were summoned to Washington for the swearing-in ceremony.

They flew down just for the day, leaving a rented truck loaded with their belongings in the charge of Gayle's parents while they are gone.

Jack, 22, a student at Utah State University, has a summer job in Yellowstone National Park. His roommate, he told reporters, had awakened him Thursday and "told me I might want to call home . . . I did, and my father just said I should try to get home as soon as possible."

Steve, at 18, has been ac-

cepted by Duke University but has now decided to take a year off and work at a cattle ranch somewhere in the west. His family calls Steve their "free spirit" — he shuns the spotlight and can usually be found either in his yellow jeep or on his motorcycle.

Susan is 17, and will be a high school senior this fall. She said she hopes to avoid major changes in her life, but conceded that for now she will merely follow the rest of the family in doing what must be done. "I just go where they go," she said.

The entire family expressed pride in the President's brief speech at Friday's ceremony. They describe it as moving. Jack had one further observation:

"I was glad it was short," he said. "It was very hot and uncomfortable in there."

United Press