

Muskets Taboo During Nixon Visit to Westchester

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By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

The patriotic aspects of the Veterans Day holiday, providing an opportunity for the muster of armed contingents, posed a security problem yesterday for President Nixon's motorcade tour of Westchester that clearly lacked a standard solution.

In White Plains, where the Battle of White Plains Monument Commission was spending this holiday weekend observing the memory of the Oct. 21, 1776, establishment of headquarters in White Plains by George Washington, Revolutionary War costumes and muskets are usually the order of the day for many participants.

Yesterday, however, no muskets were in view; and security also extended to tarring over manhole covers and requests that people in buildings overlooking the parade route remain away from their windows and not change the position of blinds.

But in New Rochelle a volley of rifle fire from a squad from an American Legion post "scared the hell out of the crowd," according to one observer.

Although President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited White Plains in 1933, no incumbent had been there since, and no President had been over most of the winding 50-mile route followed by the Presidential motorcade yesterday. The opportunity to witness history and witness a President in the flesh

was a motivating factor for some people in the crowds.

"We sal all three candidates in 1968," said John Famulare, who made the journey from Brooklyn to White Plains with his wife and four-month-old baby. "We like to get out and see everybody."

Gatano Tedone of New Rochelle was impressed by the difference between Nixon-in-the-flesh and Nixon-on-the-screen. After the open limousine rolled by at a distance of 10 feet from Mr. Tedone, he said: "He doesn't look like that on TV. He looked real. He was really alive. I thought he'd ride in a bubble top. It takes a lot of courage not to." Mr. Tedone, who said he was a Democrat, said he planned to vote for Mr. Nixon.

Political sentiments, were, of course, very much in order, and signs supporting the Democratic candidacy of Senator George McGovern were much in evidence.

In the crowd in White Plains, Mrs. Virginia Volpe of Mount Vernon accepted some McGovern literature from a campaign worker, while her son, Frank, rejected it. Praising President Nixon's economic and foreign policies, he said he planned to vote for the incumbent. "I just think he's tricky," said Mrs. Volpe. "We differ politically but we still speak to each other," said her son.

In Tarrytown, where the

crowd seemed small and the President was two hours late, the biggest cheer of the day went to an unidentified boy, perhaps 12 years old, who pedaled by on a unicycle carrying a McGovern poster on his back. Even James Gersitz, who drove down from Norwalk, Conn., to watch for Mr. Nixon and agreed that the boy merited the roars, cheers and applause. "He deserves it," said Mr. Gersitz. "He gets an A for effort."

As at parades, not everybody was in the best position to see what was happening, and in White Plains, as the crowd waited for Mr. Nixon's arrival, some little boys were playing it strictly by ear. When one of them heard the crowd booing, he said to his companions: "It must be McGovern stuff. We'd better cheer."

In New Rochelle, a teenager from New York City, Joel Peck, complained that a plainclothes security man had threatened him after he helped lead an antiwar chant. When a reporter approached the security man to check the report, he was threatened with arrest. When the reporter asked why, the security man explained: "For hassling me."

After all the waiting, reality was a bit of a disappointment for one long-haired

youth, who stood in White Plains and wore a shirt covered with Nixon buttons.

"He went by so fast—unreal," said the youth.

"We waited all this time just for that?" asked a boy in a football jersey.

"Oh, shut up," said the girl beside him.

In Yonkers, where some youngsters scaled a three-tiered white wooden cake in Getty Square that commemorates the city's 100th anniversary, one little boy who had been sitting on a curb for two and a half hours awaiting the President surrendered to the urge to go for an ice cream cone. When he returned, it was too late.

"Stupid, you missed him," hissed an older sister.

The little boy burst into tears.

Among the spectators gathered in Yonkers was Phil Piccolo, the 20-year-old operator of a fruit and vegetable store near Getty Square. Explaining his presence among the the spectators, he credited the President with having "kept me out of the war, and he kept a lot of my friends out."

"They say Nixon only goes to high class places," he said. "What's so high class about Yonkers? Most of the people here are from the black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods. "About 60 per cent of this area is on welfare, but this is Nixon Territory."

See Warren Weaver, SFChronicle [NYTimes] 20, Jan 73, this file.