

Nixon Sleeps Here

By RITA REIF

A surprise awaited President Nixon on his return to the White House last Saturday—his bedroom had been completely redecorated.

The President will now sleep in a Hepplewhite four-poster surrounded by a host of other late 18th and early 19th century American antiques, it was discussed at the end of his news conference Wednesday. As he left the room, the President stopped to thank Clement Conger, the White House curator, for his part in the surprise that Mrs. Nixon had planned.

"The room is so beautiful we'll have to show it to tourists," the President told Mr. Conger.

The unexpected disclosure caught Mr. Conger off guard, he conceded yesterday in a telephone interview. "I was shocked and surprised and terribly pleased," the ebullient curator said. "He was so thrilled. He knew that Mrs. Nixon and we had worked hard on that project, but we never expected him to mention it."

Bed Cost \$5,000

Actually the plans to transform the President's sleeping quarters date back several months and were done in collaboration with Edward V. Jones, the architectural consultant to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.

But the mahogany tester bed, carved sometime between 1800 and 1810, was purchased earlier for \$5,000. Mr. Conger selected the Salem design last Oct. 23 at a record-breaking Detroit sale conducted by H. O. McNierney, Stalker and Boos, Inc. of the Charles H. Gershenson American collection.

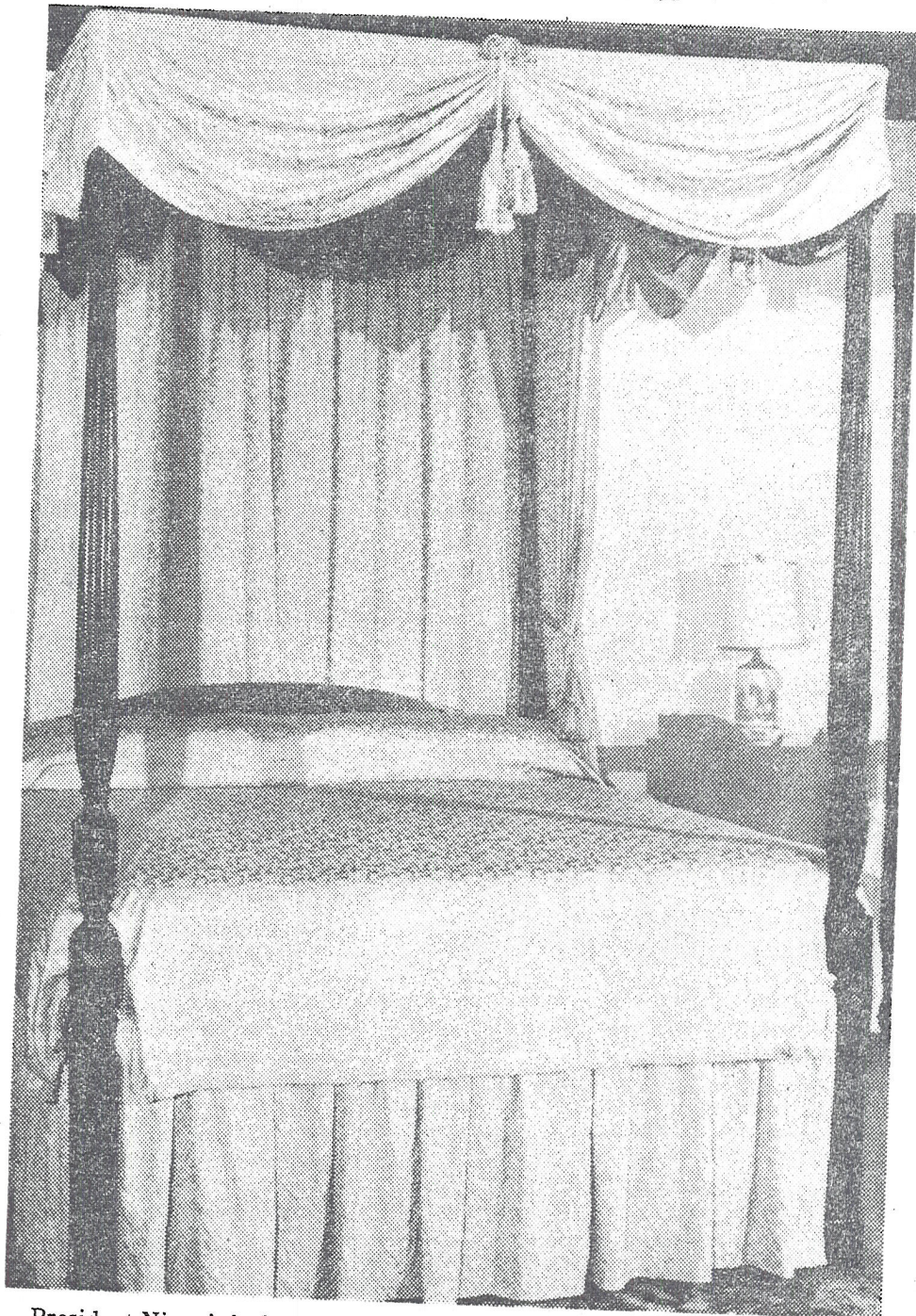
The double bed has been attributed to Samuel McIntire, the Salem master carver, but Mr. Conger has some doubts.

"It would be marvelous if it were, but it is not as richly carved as a McIntire," said Mr. Conger of the bed, which has shaped and reeded posts embellished with fan inlays.

Harold Sack of Israel Sack, Inc., the East 57th Street antiques dealers, also doubts the bed is a McIntire, but said he considered the price "reasonable for what it was and in that sale, where so many antiques went sky-high."

Mr. Sack disclosed that some of the furnishings for the bedroom were not purchased until a few days before the President's return from his two-week stay in California.

The mid-19th century Kirman on the floor predates the transformation of the white-walled room, which was formerly decorated in red, white and blue and filled with furniture that Mr. Conger characterized yesterday as "disgraceful and inappropriate for the



President Nixon's bed, a Salem design carved around 1800, was purchased for \$5,000 last October at a Detroit auction. It was installed last week in his White House bedroom as part of the current redecoration of that room.

President of the United States."

The furnishings, included "leftover reproductions from the Truman period and two or three leftover antiques." In short, he insisted, "it was a mishmash of furnishings.

New medium blue walls have toned down the cold white-walled look, he said. And the red, blue and green Kirman determined the choices of the green and white tobacco print used for the draperies and bedspread and the green and red striped fabric for the bed's small canopy.

The prizes among the art works selected are two 1853 Hong Chinese oil paintings in their original sandalwood frames that show Admiral Perry's fleet in the harbors of Hong Kong and Macao. Mr. Conger said that naval historians unaware of their existence, were "ecstatic" over the acquisition.

"Everything in the room was pretty reasonable," Mr. Conger insisted. He stressed that "not a penny of taxpayers' money has gone into it."

Mr. Conger said his only regret is that tourists will not be permitted to see the completed room. "We can't get tourists up to the second floor," he explained, "it's just too much to handle."