

'Welcome to the White House'

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The tourist line outside the White House stretched around the block yesterday, as it always does on summer mornings, but some folks felt queasy about their pilgrimage.

"Welcome to the White House," said the loudspeakers tucked discreetly under the magnolias along the fence.

"It is a unique privilege," the tape-recorded tour guide said, "for here is the only

place in the world where the elected head of state regularly opens his official home to visitors."

Robert Smith of Durham, N.C., shuffled forward with his family in the long line. "I feel," Smith said, "like if I found that my minister was doing something that was immoral."

"President and Mrs. Nixon," the loudspeakers continued, "are delighted to have you visit this country's

most historic home and, remember, even by passing through it you become part of its history."

Up and down the line, folks from Carolina and California and Alabama knew they were tourists in another chapter of history, the probable departure of Mr. Nixon. Some were pleased and some were bitter, but generally they seemed resigned to the outcome.

"It kind of degrades it," said Robbie Brown, a space

worker from Huntsville, Ala. "I think people would like to believe the President is one of God's chosen few, like policemen and preachers and that sort of thing."

"It's our first trip here and it's kind of a weird thing," said Gordon Gallagher, surrounded by his family from Athens, Ga. "I can't explain it. It's like a shiny new automobile that's tarnished. Does that sound right?"

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White House gates lined up to visit the residence of the nation's presidents