

In Whittier, the Sense Of Injury Is Personal

By Robert Meyers
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WHITTIER, Aug. 8—
"We're behind the President
100 per cent," said Grace
Newman, whose husband,
Wallace, was Whittier Col-
lege football coach when
Richard Nixon first tried
out for the team in 1930.

"I think Dick Nixon is one
of the finest people there
ever was," she said.

Mrs. Newman added that
her husband, whom Mr.
Nixon as a 155-pound rookie,
called "Chief," was too up-
set over the fate of his most
famous player to talk to the
press today.

Nearly all of the people in
this town of 74,000, founded
in 1898, have been touched
in some way over today's
dramatic events.

"He made the commence-
ment address at Whittier
College in 1954 when he was
Vice President," Marjorie G.
Kauffman recalls. "We were
so thrilled he was there."
Then her voice dropped.

Mrs. Kauffman and her
husband, Herbert, have
owned a men's wear store
on Philadelphia Avenue
since 1943, and they have
supported Richard Nixon
since he has been in public
life. "But he lied when he
said he didn't have anything
to do with Watergate," Mrs.
Kauffman says. "No matter
what your politics, it hurt."

If a town can hurt, Whit-
tier, Calif., is hurting. "The
people here have always
taken inordinate pride in
having a local boy make the
presidency," says Bill
O'Donnell, a staff assistant
to Rep. Chet Holifield (D-
Calif.), whose congressional
district includes Whittier.
"But now most people are
resigned and depressed."

Whittier is small, the kind
of small town America Rich-
ard Nixon referred to on the
recently released June 23,
1972, tape recording, when
he told former presidential
aide H. R. Haldeman to keep
his campaign appearances in
"middle America."

Kauffman's clothing store
is across the street from the
Bank of America building
where Mr. Nixon, as a young
Duke University law school
graduate, opened his first
law practice in the 1940's.

Up the street is the Wil-
liam Penn Hotel, where the
Sproptomists and Lions hold
monthly meetings, worrying
about garage sales, rum-
mage auctions, and helping
the youngsters keep busy in
summer. The City Hall is a
few blocks away, next to the
courthouse and around the
corner from a neighborhood
mortuary in a squat white
concrete building.

Clinton O. Harris, an
Oldsmobile dealer, was a
classmate of Mr. Nixon at
Whittier and a fellow mem-
ber of the Orthogonians—a
fraternity. He said Mr. Nix-
on's friends here "are think-
ing of him and hoping the
best for him. It seems to me

a tragedy that people like
Daniel Ellsberg—who in my
opinion at least is a traitor
—have gotten free because
of technicalities of the law.
And then they make a
mountain out of a mole hill
on a thing like Watergate."

Harris said he thinks one
of Mr. Nixon's strongest
qualities is loyalty and that
"I'm inclined to think that
this was what trapped him."
The President, he said, has
been "crucified for loyalty
to his friends. Wouldn't you
or I have done the same
thing?" he said.

"If he had told the truth
at the beginning, he
wouldn't have gotten in this
mess," says the owner of a
paint store who would not
give his name.

"If he'd just come out and
said it, bang, everything
would have been OK. But
this dragging it out, this ly-
ing . . ." he shakes his head.

Crystal Smith, a volunteer
in the local GOP headquar-
ters, fixes a visitor with the
same stare she says she used
when she was training Ma-
rine Corp recruits years
ago. "If the press and the
media had left him alone
he'd have been a happy
man," she says. Mrs. Smith
wanted Mr. Nixon to "fight
to the last man. I don't
think he's guilty of anything
illegal," she says, stressing
the word "illegal." "It was
his decision to resign, but I
don't think he should have."

"I think it's a catastro-
phe," said Paul Smith (no
relation to Crystal Smith),
former Whittier College
president and a member of
the National Bicentennial
Commission. "It's a tragedy,
not so much for Nixon as it
is for the system in which
we're all living."

"Nixon is a child of this
age," he continued. "We live
in a society which has pretty
weak moral underpinnings
to it, and Nixon is a casualty
of that. Society—not Nixon
—should be at the bar."

Smith, a constitutional
historian, supervised Mr.
Nixon's studies in that field.
"If his resignation means we
put the total blame on
Nixon, it was ill-timed and
he shouldn't have done it."

Blake Sanborn is the
mayor of Whittier, a Repub-
lican who is in the insur-
ance and investments busi-
ness. "I'm shocked," he says.
"It's like being on the front
row of history. I'm disap-
pointed to see a man end a
career like that. I've seen
things of greater magnitude
and nothing ever comes of
it. I mean such things as the
attack on Pearl Harbor,
where there was advanced
warning, and everyone
knows it."

Fred Sarchet is a 70-year-
old retired engineer who
hasn't been quieted by age
or the enormity of today's
events. "I've been an enemy
of Richard Nixon ever since
he knifed Jerry Voorhis," he
said while working in his
rose garden.

"Nixon would do anything
to achieve his ends. That's
the only principle he had.
I'm afraid I can't find too
much sympathy for him.
They should go ahead with
the impeachment and crimi-
nal prosecution. Nixon has
lied all his life."

Louis T. Jones, who taught
young Republican Richard

Nixon some of his early his-
tory lessons, is now retired
and living in a comfortable
second-story apartment at
the William Penn Hotel.

"He had a marvelous
mind," Jones, 90, recalled, as
he and his wife Pearl, 94,
ate some sliced meat and po-
tatoes. Jones taught a class
in world history in 1931 at
Whittier College.

"He once told me he had
every handwritten note he'd
ever made in my class,"
Jones said. "Knowing Dick
as I do, I trust his judgment
in everything he does." As
for the President's resigna-
tion, Jones says "I know in
his own mind and heart he
thought it would be in the
best interests of the coun-
try."

"A the first sign of Water-
gate I dropped him a note, a
hasty SOS," Jones says. "I
told him that if he were in
violation of the law, then he
must make his own decision.
What he did must be a re-
sult of his own dedicated
thought. He knows what he
did. I don't."