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Resignation Leaves Town Bitter, Confused

By Bill Richards

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BARNESVILLE, Md., Aug. 8—In 1972, this staunchly Democratic little community in upper Montgomery County was Nixon country.

Barnesville's voters trooped dutifully to the polls in the local elementary school to back Richard M. Nixon by a 450 to 198 margin over his Democratic rival Sen. George McGovern.

The victory was one of the largest ever awarded to a presidential candidate in the election district's history.

Today, however, with their radios and television sets tuned to President Ford's swearing-in ceremony, people here were still assessing the remarkable events of the last week in Washington—40 miles and another world away—with a mixture of bitterness and confusion.

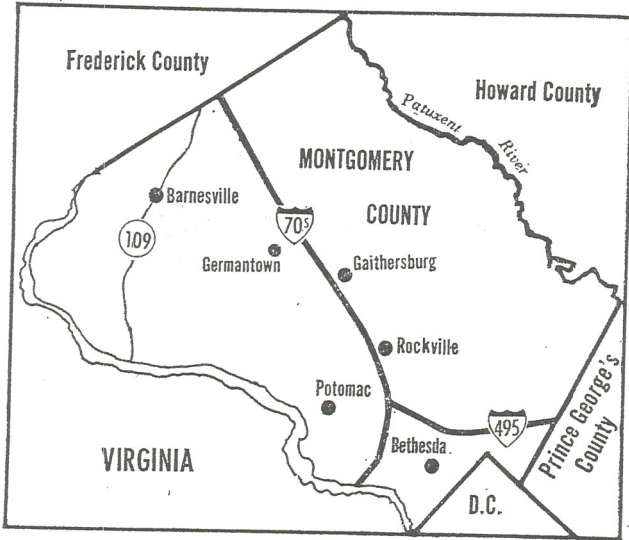
Ida L. Price, the town's 48-year-old postmistress, surveyed a grinning portrait of Nixon fixed to the wall of the minuscule lobby of the post office in her home and wondered this morning whether it should come down.

"Oh, there were some around here who'd come in and make a nasty crack at it or a big sweeping bow when things started to heat up," she said. "They'd tell me I ought to take the thing down but I'd tell them that rules are rules and it was staying up."

Mrs. Price said that she, like a number of her customers, voted for the former President two years ago. "At the time he seemed like the lesser of two evils," she said. "Now I just don't know."

Mrs. Price studied the picture a little longer and decided to leave it on the wall. "I'll wait for a directive to tell me what to do," she said.

After listening last night to Mr. Nixon's farewell address, sitting in her living room behind the post office with her family, Mrs. Price said she did not think Nixon should have to face a trial.



Associated Press

Barnesville is in northwest Montgomery County.

"He was composed and he did what he had to do without a lot of whining," she said. "Nothing would be served now by sending him to jail I just feel he must be going through 30,000 hells already."

Montgomery County's election district 11, which is composed of Barnesville and the neighboring farms stretching north toward the Frederick County line, has 811 registered voters. Of this total 508 are Democrats and 303 are Republicans.

"Generally, there isn't much talk about politics," said George Wood, the town's mayor. "We're all friends and that kind of talk just makes enemies."

But today, Wood, 75, and his wife Diana sat in the barn behind their house, which they converted several years ago into an antique shop, and said they thought Nixon should face a public trial on the charges against him.

"I kept waiting and waiting during his speech last night for him to explain why he was resigning," said Mrs. Wood. "He told us who he was but he never did say what he did. You don't just throw out the President of

the country and forget about it. You have to know why."

Others who listened to the speech last night said they felt he had been treated badly and should not have resigned.

"I'm sorry to see this happen," said Woolwine Waddell, who raises Arabian horses on a rolling farm behind his home here. "Someday he'll go down as the greatest President since Hoover."

Waddell, a Democrat who voted for Nixon in 1972, watched the speech in silence in the cedar paneled den of his hilltop house here with his wife and a neighboring couple, Milton and Shirley Ricketts.

At the conclusion of the speech, Mrs. Ricketts criticized Nixon, using a theme that was repeated here today again and again—that he should not have allowed his family to publicly support him without telling them all that he knew.

"I'm sure his family knew nothing of what their father knew," she said. "There can be no worse punishment than having to face your family with that on your mind."