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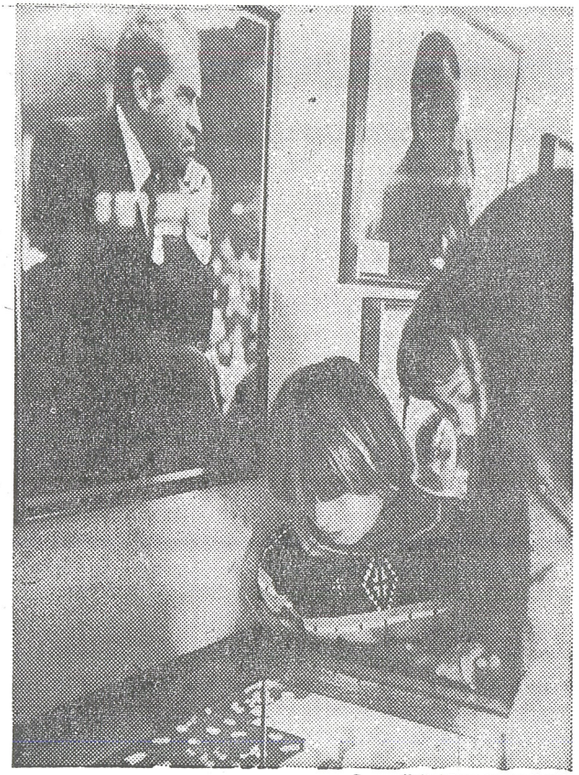
Nixon Marks 63d Birthday; Mini-Museum Opened



United Press International

Yesterday, on Richard M. Nixon's 63d birthday, a collection of articles he once owned, along with other Nixon memorabilia, went on view at the San Clemente Inn, not far from his California home. Schoolchildren visited it.

By EVERETT R. HOLLES

Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Jan. 9—A mini-museum of memorabilia of Richard M. Nixon, from the chopsticks he used at a state dinner in Peking to the Presidential pennant that flew from his armored limousine, was unveiled here today on the former President's 63d birthday.

Billed as "a bit of history, neither pro-Nixon nor anti-Nixon," the exhibit occupies what was, until a few weeks ago, the coffee shop just off the lobby of the San Clemente Inn a half mile down the Avenida del Presidente from Mr. Nixon's oceanfront estate El Casa Pacifica.

The several hundred oddly assorted souvenirs and other items, none of which deal in a documentary way with Mr. Nixon's five and a half years in the Presidency, were assembled in glass cases under guard by Paul Presley, who owns the inn and is Mr. Nixon's next door neighbor and ardent admirer.

The only vague reminder of the Watergate scandal that drove Mr. Nlxon from office and into seclusion here 17 months ago was a framed letter from Johh D' Ehrlichman to Mr. Nixon dated April 30, 1973, reslgning his position as White House assistant for domestic affairs.

"In putting together this collection, we made every effort to avoid gettfng into Watergate," said Mr. Presley, who acknowledged that, with Mr' Nixoh's help, he is counting on the exhibit to attract additional guests to his hostelry.

Mr. and Mrs. Nixon declined to appear at a reception tonight on the opening of the museum, explaining that a dLnner party had been arranged to marL the former President's blrthday and the return earlier in the day of Julie Nixon Eisenhower and her husband, David, from thelr visit to China. The family, a few unidentified friends, and several mQNbgrs of Mr. Nixon's staff were invited to the dinner.

During the day, Mr. Nixon underwent a routine physical checkup at his home.

David and Jhlie Eisenhower brought with them a birthday gif4 for Mr. Nixon from Chairman Mao Tse-tung and a personal message from the Chlnese leader inviting Mr. and Mrs. Nixon to return to China for a visit as the gufsts of PeLing.

A private viewing of the exhibit is being arranged for Mr. and Mrs. Nixon, perhaps tomorrow or Sunday.

Many of the mementos on display at the San Clemente Inn came from 170 cartons of his non-Presidential papers and keepsakes that he persuaded the Government to return to him a year ago.

However, the keepsakes from the shipment most treasured by Mr. Nixon, a large collection of elephan figurines collected over a period of 30 years and the originals of his favorite political cartoons, were not released by Mr. Nixon for the exhibit.

'Little Bit of History'

Mr. Presley's "little bit of history" had as its centerpiece a highly polished walnut desk used by the Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid I. Brezhnev for his broadcast to the American people on Jan. 23, 1973, from the Western White House here. Nearby were two bottles of Russian vodka.

Scattered among the gold stamp covers of Mr. Nixon's briefing books for his detente discussions in China and the Soviet Union and copies of his daily White House appointment schedules are White House match books inscribed with his name, more than 50 tie clasps and sets of cuff buttons bearing the Presidential seal or foreign emblems and buttons from his political campaigns dating back to 1946.

Pens used to sign important pieces of legislation are in the display along with menus and place cards from formal dinners given in his honor in Russia and China. A collection of golf balls includes several imprinted with his name and others stamped "Gerry Ford" and "General Ike."

President Eisenhower's red leather golf bag and clubs, on loan to the exhibit by David Eisenhower, stood beside one of Mr. Nixon's golf bags.

Helping Mr. Presley assemble the mementos was Col. Jack Brennan, a former White House military aide who resigned from the Marine Corps several months ago to remain with Mr. Nixon in retirement as his chief assistant. Many of the items on display were brought back from the Presidential travels by Colonel Brennan.

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!

* Nixons visited the museum 22 Apr 76 (?) - photo WXP 23 Apr 76. See also WXP 20 Jun 76, article by Donnie Radcliffe, page 2, col. 2.