

Record of a President—A Step-by-Step Analysis

**THE MAN WHO PAR-
DONED NIXON.** By Clark
Mollenhoff. St. Martin's/Gi-
niger. 311 pp.; \$8.95.

Reviewed by
Michael Harris

CLARK Mollenhoff knew Gerald Ford for years and regarded him as an amiable politician with long-standing weaknesses — a “professional nice guy” who almost always got someone else to do the dirty work. In other words, an undistinguished hack.

Still, Mollenhoff found himself praising the new President in a conversation with H. R. Gross, one of the most conservative members of Congress, soon after Nixon resigned.

“I was extolling Ford's record in a manner that glossed over or excused a



GERALD FORD

few controversial points,” Mollenhoff recalled.

“‘Come down off that cloud,’ the crusty Iowa Republican verbally slapped me on the cheek. ‘Ford will probably be better than Nixon, and that's only because Nixon made such a mess of

it, but I have seen Jerry Ford operate for 25 years. Jerry Ford will deal on anything, and don't forget it.’”

★ ★ ★

MOLLENHOFF, longtime chief of the Des Moines Register and Tribune's Washington bureau, devotes the book to a step-by-step analysis of the Ford record in the White House. He clearly believes, but cannot prove, that Ford's heavy obligations to Nixon led to the controversial pardon of the former President.

The detail is not always fascinating, but it is thorough enough to let a reader understand why Mollenhoff can believe, “Ford's 19 months as President have given us little to praise and much that is highly vulnerable to criticism.”