

Taped Tour of Nixon Estate



AP Wirephotos.

Tourists had to be satisfied yesterday with a look at Nixon's house from the bus windows

Tight Security for 10-Minute Bus Ride

San Clemente

Most people felt it was all too brief and lacking in the personal touch, but the public did get its first closeup glimpse yesterday of the estate where former President Nixon and his wife, Pat, live.

The consensus among the 8000 persons who took a ten-minute tour of La Casa Pacifica by bus is that it's an attractive, but not opulent, place to spend one's retirement years.

The Nixons opened up their premises for the all-day tours to help this city of 26,000 celebrate its 50th birthday. Proceeds, at \$2.50 a person, went to the Chamber of Commerce to be used in promoting the virtues of visiting or moving to this beach town, 60 miles south of Los Angeles.

Security was heavy. A uniformed U.S. marshal stood at the

opening into the courtyard around which the four-bedroom house is built. Law officers were spaced along the tour route. San Clemente Police plainclothesmen rode on each bus.

Neither the former President nor Mrs. Nixon was visible as the cavalcade of buses wound through their 4½-acre grounds, but the announcer on a seven-minute tape recording played on each bus said:

"The President is in his office at this moment, finishing his memoirs, which will be completed in May."

On one of the first buses, which began rolling at 8:30 a.m., the recording wouldn't work. This prompted one rider to quip: "Rosemary Woods (Nixon's former personal secretary) must have handled our tape."

Among those making the tour
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A policeman searched the purse of a woman before she boarded the bus for the tour

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were many Nixon admirers who remained loyal to him through his forced resignation from the presidency Aug. 9, 1974, because of the Watergate affair.

Muriel Loubat Caire of New Orleans, a long-time contributor to Republican candidates, said she was offered \$1500 for her pair of \$2.50 tickets but turned it down. For her and others, the tour was almost like a pilgrimage.

Harriet P. Bakenhus, a school principal in Orange thought the "tour was great." She said her only disappointment was that the ex-President didn't step outside and wave.

"I see he had tumbleweed on his lawn sprinklers, just like the problem we have," noted Bakenhus, who said she is a Nixon loyalist who "stood in the hot sun three hours to welcome him when he came home."

Others were not convinced that the tour was worth the \$2.50.

After a bus had gone its way through the palm and eucalyptus-lined streets of the estate on a bluff overlooking the Pacific, slowing but not stopping at the courtyard entrance, passengers were asked for their reactions:

"It's short, to say the least," said one man.

"It was interesting, but we didn't see that much," said another woman.

"It was unimpressive," said San Clemente chiropractor David Wright. "The residence is set so far back that you can't really see the grounds as I would have liked to have seen them."

Ella Lewis, a speech and drama instructor at Long Beach City College, took the tour primarily because she had Pat Nixon as a typing teacher at Whittier High School and has admired her ever since.

"I liked the tour, though I wish I could have seen more," she said. "I'm glad that she and he can live there. I appreciate that they have the privacy that they must need very much at this time."

There were also Nixon detractors making the tour.

Said one man as the bus headed out of the grounds: "Well, Nixon ripped us off again."

Michael Levine of Los Angeles was also critical. He said: "What I got out of the tour was that crime pays. It's a lovely home."