Inaugurations Home Page

APPENDIX H

Inaugurals of Presidents of the United States: Some Precedents and Notable Events

The information below is courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol. It has been compiled by the Office of the Curator from contemporary accounts and other sources in the files of the Architect of the Capitol.

Please note that this compilation includes more dates than those listed for this online collection. This document includes any dates in which a president took the Oath of Office before his formal inauguration.

April 30, 1789 -- George Washington
1.Oath of office taken out-of-doors.
2.Pronounced the words, "So help me God" after taking the oath; other presidents have followed this example.
3.Set the precedent of kissing the Bible after the oath.
4.Fireworks concluded the day's celebration, all of which was paid for by private citizens.
5.Because of pressing public business, the inaugural ball was held on May 7. The president's wife, Martha, did not make the trip to New York.

March 4, 1793 -- George Washington
1.Shortest inaugural address (135 words).

March 4, 1797 -- John Adams
1.First president to receive the oath from the Chief Justice of the United States (Oliver Ellsworth).

March 4, 1801 -- Thomas Jefferson
1.Began the custom of writing to Congress to accept the inauguration and arrange the time for the ceremonies.
2.The first and probably only president to walk to and from his inaugural.
3.First president to be inaugurated at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.
4.First newspaper extra of an inaugural address, printed by the *National Intelligencer*.

March 4, 1805 -- Thomas Jefferson

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Inaugural Quiz!

Question 4

Where is the oath of office found in the Constitution?

Answer

The oath of office is found in Article II, section 1, clause 8 of the Constitution, which reads:

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation: - - "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

George Washington's first inauguration took place at Federal Hall in New York City, where the first Congress was assembled. **[National Archives, Still Pictures Branch, 148-CCD-92C]**

The Presidential Oath of Office was set down in the Constitution by the Founding Fathers during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The oath originally proposed was much shorter, requiring the President-elect to swear only to "faithfully execute the office of President of the United States." James Madison, a delegate to the Convention from Virginia, believed that the Chief Executive should be bound by oath to support the articles of the Union—the very document the Convention was struggling to create. Along with George Mason, another Virginia delegate, Madison proposed that the President also be made to swear to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Midway through the Convention, a printed draft of the Constitution as it existed to that point was issued to each delegate. Delegates used them as working documents, filling the margins and other spaces with the changes continually being debated by the Convention. The copy shown here belonged to George Washington, President of the Convention. In article X of this draft, the changes Madison and Mason proposed for the oath of office are seen in the hand of the first person to utter those solemn, enduring words.

After taking the oath at his 1789 inaugural, Washington added, "So help me, God." Every subsequent President has also added that phrase.

Note: This original document, the printed draft of the Constitution of the United States (page 5), August 6, 1787, annotated by George Washington [Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, RG 360], will be on display in the Rotunda of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, from January 17 to 26, 1997.

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March 18, 2004

Margaret Downey
Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia
P.O. Box 242
Pocopson, PA 19366-0242

Dear Ms. Downey:

I am responding to your January 23 letter to John Rumm concerning the Presidential Oath exhibit at the National Constitution Center. Thank you for your comments; I apologize for the delayed response, which resulted from an internal miscommunication.

Your legitimate concerns have given us all food for thought and prompted us to review the exhibit. Many of the points you raise were issues we considered as we developed the exhibit. On of our major objectives in that process was to maintain a posture of neutrality toward religion.

We were conscious, of course, of the First Amendment establishment issues that such an installation raised and the fact that Article 6 of the Constitution prohibits test oaths. We tried to take those concerns into account as we designed the exhibit content. For instance, as you point out in your letter, the mock book available to visitors on the presidential podium is not a Bible. In fact, it's not necessarily meant to represent a religious text at all. On the cover, it is labeled: "Religious or legal book of your choice." (One result of our review was to note that the labeling on the book had worn. We will be replacing it to increase its legibility.)

In addition, the text label at the podium makes the point that the words "so help me God," uttered by many, but not all, presidents at their inaugurations is not constitutional, but rather a tradition started by George Washington. The label reads:

> **George Washington began the tradition of swearing on the Bible**
>
> Washington was the first to take the Oath of Office with his hand on a Bible. He also started the tradition of saying "So help me God" and kissing the Bible. In fact, some presidents still use the same King James Bible that Washington used. But Theodore Roosevelt

didn't use a book at all. And a few presidents did not even "swear." Instead, they "affirmed" that they would faithfully carry out their duties.

Finally, when the Judge administers the oath to visitors on the blue screen and utters the words "So help me God," the captioning on the screen clearly labels the words as "traditional."

I believe that the foregoing content maintains the neutrality we tried to achieve as we developed the exhibit, but I certainly respect your right to disagree.

Should the time come when we consider a redesign of the exhibit, we will keep your concerns in mind. In the meantime, thank you for sharing your thoughts. I apologize again for the delayed response.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Frank
Senior Director of Research

cc: John Rumm, Director of Exhibits
Beth Twiss-Garity, VP of Interpretation

Presidential Inaugurations Past and Present: A Look at the History Behind the Pomp and Circumstance

Donald R. Kennon, Chief Historian, United States Capitol Historical Society
Foreign Press Center Briefing
Washington, DC
January 13, 2005

2:00 P.M. EST

Real Audio of Briefing

MR. DENIG: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Washington Foreign Press Center. Welcome, also, to journalists assembled in our New York Foreign Press Center.

As the nation begins to focus on preparing for the presidential inauguration, the 55th in our history, we thought it would be useful to present to our journalists a historical briefing on the inaugurations. And so today we present a briefing on presidential inaugurations, past and present.

And we have an expert to talk about that. It's Dr. Donald Kennon, the Chief Historian with the United States Capitol Historical Society. Dr. Kennon will have opening remarks on the history of the inaugurations, and after that, will be very glad to take your questions.

Dr. Kennon.

DR. KENNON: Well, thank you very much. I thought what I would do would be to just briefly outline the day's events for the inauguration, what takes place; talk a little bit about why we do it the way we do it; and then give you some of my thoughts on what's significant about presidential inaugurations, how they have evolved in the history of our nation, and then take some questions from you, because I know you probably have many questions about the presidential inauguration and how it's handled in our nation.

Constitution of the United States."

So before he can actually begin to execute his office, he has to take this oath. And the oath is very interesting. What's he swearing allegiance to? He's swearing allegiance to this: To the Constitution. To a written document that provides the blueprint for our form of government. So people can change, policy agendas can change, parties can change, but the structure remains the same. The individuals are interchangeable, but the structure remains the same. And that's what's important.

The oath -- I'll just make a few closing remarks. The oath is usually taken on a bible. George Washington, again, set the tradition of taking an oath of office on the bible in 1789. They had to borrow a bible from a nearby Masonic lodge in order to take that oath and in fact, the so-called Washington Masonic bible has been used on four occasions since that time. And it's here in town at the National Archives on display. I don't know if it's planned to be used at this inaugural or not, but I wouldn't be surprised if it is. Many presidents use a family bible and often borrow the Washington bible to take the oath of office, put their left hand on the bible, raise their right hand, and take the oath.

Now, Washington also set a precedent by adding, after he said the oath of office, the words: "So help me, God." Now, if you go on the website of the Presidential Inaugural Committee today, they will give you the text of the oath of office and they say it's as specified in the Constitution. And then they have the text. And then they put the, "So help me, God." [But] "So help me, God" is not in the Constitution. It's not specified. It's something that was added by Washington and has been said by almost every president since then. There have been a couple of occasions when that didn't happen. One was, Franklin Roosevelt in 1933. He simply forgot because he was in such a hurry to get to his inaugural address – in 1933, it's his first inauguration, he is facing the Great Depression, and he is anxious to get to his speech where he -- you may recall the famous words -- "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," -- a plea for unity in the face of the Great Depression.

Maybe I'll make just a couple of remarks about inaugural addresses. That's usually been the theme of inaugural addresses -- a plea for national unity. Remember, we're a diverse nation. Many different ethnic groups, many different nationalities, many different religious organizations and groups have coalesced to create this nation, so the challenge of our governing system is to bring unity out of this diversity. And so many of the presidential inaugurations have been pleas for unity. Thomas Jefferson, in that 1801 Inaugural Address -- remember I spoke about how there was the fear that there might be another revolution -- in fact, let me just cite a little bit of that Inaugural Address. He said, "Let us then, fellow citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans. We are all Federalists." So he was saying that, as Americans, as citizens of the United States, we have more in common than we have in difference.

GRADES 3–5

I Do Solemnly Swear: Presidential Inaugurations

Introduction

> Thomas Jefferson walked to his first inaugural. When it was over, he returned to his boardinghouse for dinner. All the seats were filled.
>
> Andrew Jackson, having opened the White House to the public—in keeping with a tradition started by Jefferson—was forced to escape a rowdy mob of well-wishers by climbing out the window.
>
> Ronald Reagan took the oath of office privately on the twentieth of January, holding the public ceremony the following day, due to a conflict with the Super Bowl.

Presidential inaugurations have been solemn ceremonies and uninhibited celebrations. They are carefully scripted and they are unpredictable. They reflect tradition and they reflect the moment.

Help your students reflect on what the Presidential inauguration has become and what it has been, while they meet a host of memorable historical figures and uncover a sense of America's past through archival materials.

Learning Objectives

After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to:

- Summarize the Constitutional requirements for inaugurations and the oath of office.
- Identify at least three historical examples of inaugural exceptions or precedents.
- List other activities that occur at inaugurations.
- Describe the purpose of an inauguration.
- State an opinion about what they believe should happen at an inauguration.

Guiding Question:

What is required by the Constitution to occur at a presidential inauguration? What other events occur/have occurred at inaugurations?

Preparing to Teach this Lesson

Subject Areas

Art and Culture
- Visual Arts

History and Social Studies
- U.S. History - Civics and U.S. Government
- U.S. History - Other

Literature and Language Arts
- Poetry

Time Required

One to two class periods for each of five lessons

Skills

primary document analysis
critical thinking
collaboration
brainstorming
information gathering
summarizing
analysis

Additional Data

Date Created: 05/21/02

Send us feedback about this lesson

Review the lesson plan. Select a variety of archival materials from the various lessons to use in discussions of Presidential inaugurals. Bookmark them if practical. Download and print the archival documents you select and duplicate copies of each for viewing by students.

In an inaugural year, you can coordinate the teaching of this unit with current events. If you use the lessons in the week prior to the inauguration, then, immediately after the inauguration, students can look in the media for examples of the events discussed. Another approach would be to begin the unit the day after the inauguration. Have volunteers bring in news clippings the day after the inauguration. Sharing these would replace the first activity in the first lesson.

The Digital Classroom offers a series of worksheets for analyzing primary source documents, including written documents and photographs, that you may wish to use or adapt to help students in reviewing the materials presented in this unit.

Suggested Activities

Lesson 1: Swearing-In
Lesson 2: Swearing-In Musts
Lesson 3: Sometimes It's Okay to Swear (or at Least to Affirm): The Oath of Office
Lesson 4: Giving the Oath / Taking the Oath
Lesson 5: Celebrate!
Extending the Lesson

Lesson 1 Swearing-In

Every inauguration is a pivotal event, showcasing the orderly transition of power in our democracy. But, what is actually required to happen at a presidential inauguration?

Share with the class the photo "President-elect Nixon taking the oath of office as President of the United States," accessible by a search for the title in the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom. Identify President Nixon. Ask the class what he is doing. Has anyone in the class had to take an oath (such as the Girl or Boy Scout promise)? What did the oath say? Why take an oath anyway?

The administration of the presidential oath is a very important event. The lessons in this unit are designed to help students understand the origin of the events that take place at a presidential inauguration.

Share with the class the digital copy of Jefferson's letter of March 2, 1801 concerning the inauguration, found in the EDSITEment resource American Memory in the *Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1. General Correspondence. 1651-1827.* The letter reads:

> Sir:
> I beg leave through you to inform the honorable the House of Representatives of the United States that I shall take the oath which the Constitution prescribes to the President of the United States before he enters on the execution of his office, on Wednesday the 4th, inst. at twelve o'clock in the Senate Chambers.

The motion of the Senate made in response reads:

> The President, elect, of the United States having informed the Senate that he proposes to take the oath which the Constitution prescribes to the President of the United States before he enters on the execution of

> his office, on Wednesday the 4th, instant at twelve o'clock in the Senate Chambers:
>
> Ordered, that the Secretary communicate that information to the House of Representatives that seats be provided for such members of the House of Representatives and such of the public Ministers as may think it proper to attend and that the Gallery be opened to the citizens of the United States.

What can students learn about Jefferson's swearing-in ceremony from the letter and the motion?

Now have the class inspect one of the earliest photos of an inauguration, that of Lincoln's first inauguration, found through a link from American Memory to The Library of Congress' America's Library. (Buchanan's inauguration was actually the first photographed.) What is happening at this ceremony? How is it different from Jefferson's inauguration? What does this indicate is allowed to change about an inauguration?

(NOTE: For interested classes, more information about Lincoln's first inauguration is available at Abraham Lincoln's Inauguration: March 4, 1861.)

Lesson 2 Swearing-In Musts

What *is* required of the swearing-in? Only what is discussed in the Constitution. Review Article II, Section 1 Clause 7:

> Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

and the 20th Amendment to the Constitution:

> The terms of the President and the Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th of January ... and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

(NOTE: The text of the Constitution is accessible through the EDSITEment resource Avalon Project at the Yale Law School.)

Four words not prescribed by the Constitution have been part of every President's oath. At his 1789 inaugural, Washington added, "So help me, God." Every subsequent President has also added that phrase. A drawing of Washington's first inaugural and information about it is available from the Digital Classroom.

Do students think the inaugural ceremony should be more scripted, or that more requirements for the inauguration should be created?

Lesson 3 Sometimes It's Okay to Swear (or at Least to Affirm): The Oath of Office

What does the oath mean?

There was a good deal of discussion among the Founding Fathers as to what the oath should contain. The Digital Classroom offers an image of Washington's copy of the working draft of the Constitution, in which you can see an early version of the oath - near the end of section X -- with Washington's notes of changes

Congressional Quarterly's

Guide to the Presidency

Michael Nelson
Editor

Washington, D.C.

Congressional Quarterly Inc.

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1414 22nd Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037

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Printed in the United States of America

REF
JK
516
.C57
1989

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Congressional Quarterly's guide to the presidency/Michael Nelson, editor.
p. cm.
Bibliography: p.
ISBN 0-87187-500-4: $137.50
1. Presidents--United States. I. Nelson, Michael, 1949- II. Congressional Quarterly, inc. III. Title: Guide to the presidency.
JK516.C57 1989 89-7184
353.03' 13--dc20 CIP

Guide to the Presidency

THIRD EDITION • VOLUME I

MICHAEL NELSON, Editor

CQ PRESS
A Division of Congressional Quarterly Inc.
Washington, D.C.

CQ Press
1255 22nd Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20037

202-729-1900; toll-free, 1-866-4CQ-PRESS (1-866-427-7737)

www.cqpress.com

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∞ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

06 05 04 03 02 5 4 3 2 1

Illustration credits and acknowledgments begin on page 1763, Volume II, which is to be considered an extension of the copyright page.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Guide to the presidency / Michael Nelson, editor.— 3rd ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1-56802-714-1 (hardcover; set : alk. paper) — ISBN 1-56802-715-X (hardcover; v. 1 : alk. paper) — ISBN 1-56802-716-8 (hardcover; v. 2 : alk. paper)
1. Presidents—United States. I. Nelson, Michael, 1949–
JK516 .C57 2002
352.23'0973—dc21

2002151619

ISBN: 1-56802-714-1 (set: alk. paper)
ISBN: 1-56802-715-X (v. 1: alk. paper)
ISBN: 1-56802-716-8 (v. 2: alk. paper)

Presidents sometimes allow their cabinet secretaries to choose their own assistant secretaries. Nixon in his first term and Carter did not exert control over mid-level appointments, as many other presidents have done. Both soon found that the departments were "captured" by career bureaucrats and the interest groups connected with the agencies. Recognizing that the lack of central coordination of appointments had reduced Carter's ability to control his administration, Clinton insisted on his right to make subcabinet appointments. By placing loyal supporters in key department posts, he hoped to ensure that the policies carried out within the bureaucracy were those of his administration. Although Clinton was criticized for the slow pace at which he filled policy-making positions, this strategy effectively centralized political power within the White House.

The administration's congressional liaison is an especially important member of the administration. Carter's liaison, Frank Moore, lacked experience on Capitol Hill and was ineffective as the president's lobbyist. Reagan's liaisons, Max Friedersdorf and Kenneth Duberstein, won high marks, especially for their efforts in behalf of the administration's tax- and budget-cutting initiatives.

EARLY ADVICE

Incoming presidents have outside allies who offer advice on appointments and policy options. For example, the Democratic Leadership Council, a politically moderate think tank that Clinton had chaired in the 1980s, prepared a set of proposals for President-elect Clinton in 1992. Earlier, in 1980, the Heritage Foundation had provided Reagan's transition team with a three-thousand-page report urging a quick selection of top aides and several policy initiatives.

The outgoing administration's briefings of the president-elect and the incoming team could be helpful, but the different styles of the two groups often block meaningful exchanges. The most important briefing deals with the nuclear capacities of other nations—a briefing that never fails to sober the new president from the intoxication of the recent electoral success.

The meeting between the incoming and outgoing president is usually cordial, but the new executive is reluctant to take much advice. In 1952, after providing President-elect Eisenhower with advice on staff operations, Harry S. Truman remarked, "I think all this went into one ear and out the other." [11] Carter reported that Reagan was inattentive during their Oval Office meeting. The Reagan transition team's cooperation with agencies such as the Office of Management and Budget was more sustained.

EARLY CONSIDERATIONS

A president's early signals to the bureaucracy are an important factor in relations between the White House and the rest of the executive branch. Nixon encouraged the bureaucratic resistance he feared with his repeated statements about the Democratic and liberal bias of civil servants.[12] Reagan appointed lower-level administrators only after a thorough screening by his transition team to ensure ideological purity and loyalty to the administration.

The size of the legislative agenda is another important consideration for the new administration. Clinton's initiatives—federal deficit reduction, economic stimulus, health care reform, "reinventing government," campaign finance reform, better relations with Russia—were so wide-ranging that the president was not able to muster the influence needed to prevail in all areas. Even when his efforts succeeded, Clinton did not receive much credit because of other failures along the way. Carter had had the same difficulty. Reagan, by contrast, emphasized issues directly pertaining to the budget—taxes, cuts in domestic spending, and increases in military spending. The work of incoming budget director David Stockman was crucial to Reagan's ability to "hit the ground running." George W. Bush confined his early legislative agenda to the issues he had stressed in the election: tax cuts, education reform, and support for faith-based groups in the provision of social services.

The Inauguration

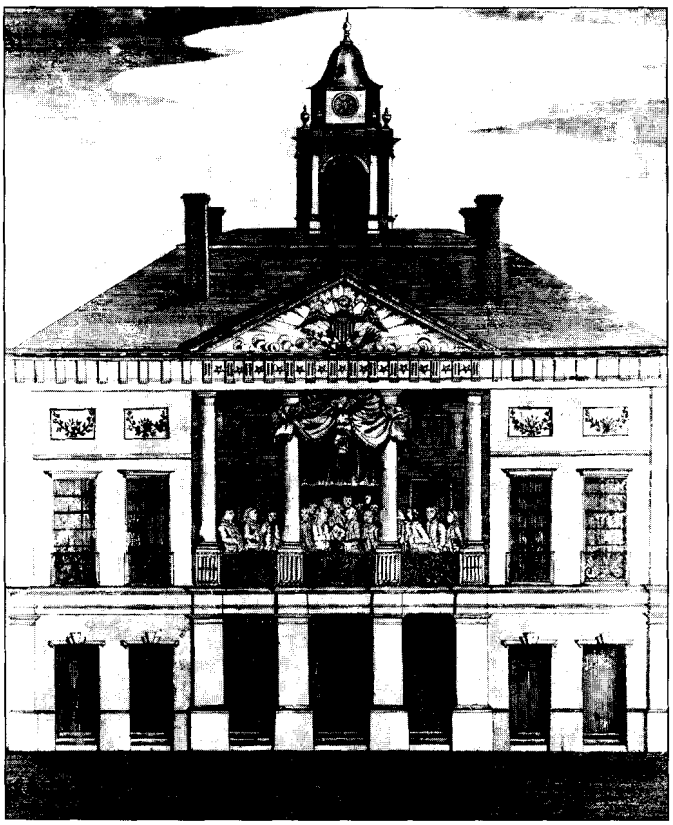
Ritual acts pervade politics in recognition that the symbolism of public rites reassures and binds together diverse peoples. In keeping with this understanding, each presidential election is capped by a ceremony of grand proportions: the inauguration of the new president. This ceremony is an overt political ritual intended to instill patriotism, unite the nation behind its leader, and provide for an orderly transfer of power. It does so through a combination of pageantry and rhetoric.[13] Yet almost none of that ceremony is required by law. Most of it has evolved by way of tradition.

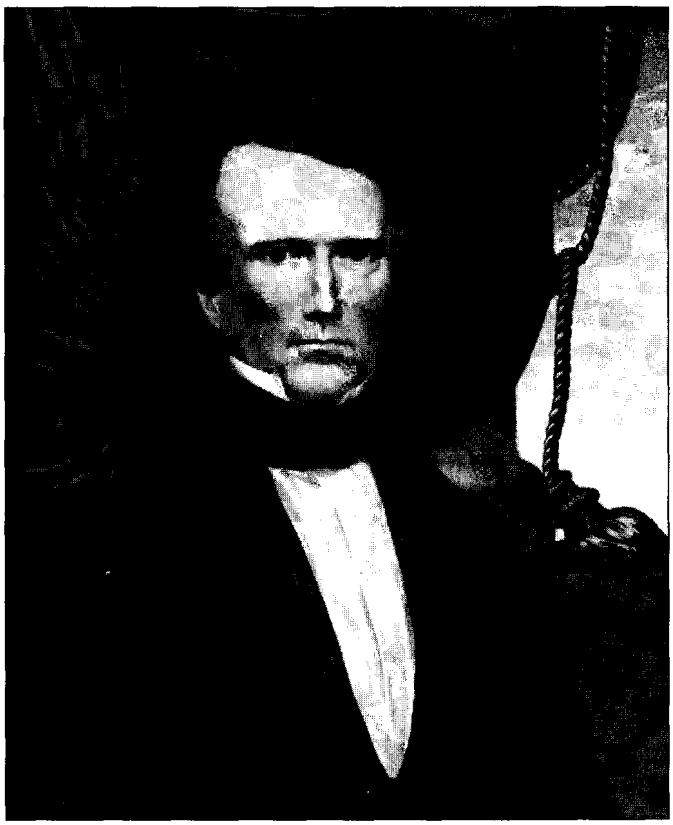
The four-year presidential and vice-presidential terms expire at noon on the January 20 that follows a presidential election. Before the 1933 enactment of the Twentieth Amendment, the Constitution was silent on when terms began and ended. Presidential inaugurations were held on March 4 as required by a 1792 act of Congress.

OATH OF OFFICE

The only part of the inaugural ceremony that is required by the Constitution is the taking of the oath of office. Article II, Section 1, Clause 8, states the words that every president has repeated: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." Only Franklin Pierce in 1853 affirmed (rather than swore) to faithfully execute the office that he was about to enter. The practice of adding the words "so help me God" at the conclusion of the oath was begun by George Washington at the first inaugural ceremony. The vice president recites the same oath taken by all other federal officers except the president. It is prescribed by Congress in the *United States Code*.

Washington also was the first president to take the oath of office with his left hand placed on the Bible and his right hand raised toward heaven. Although not required by the Constitu-





On April 30, 1789, at Federal Hall in New York City, George Washington took the oath of office. The practice of adding the words "so help me God" at the end of the oath was begun by Washington at this first inaugural ceremony. Only Franklin Pierce, in 1853, affirmed (rather than swore) to faithfully execute the office that he was about to enter.

tion, the practice of taking oaths on the Bible was deeply ingrained in English and colonial history. For centuries, the kings and queens of Britain had taken their coronation oaths on Bibles, and the use of a Bible was an established practice in the administration of oaths in civil and ecclesiastical courts.[14]

Nevertheless, no one thought to secure a Bible for Washington's inauguration until shortly before the general arrived at Federal Hall in New York City for his swearing in. The chief justice of the New York state judiciary, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, who was to administer the oath, feared that the oath would lack legitimacy without a Bible, but none could be found in the building. One was finally borrowed from St. John's Masonic Lodge No. 1, a few blocks away on Wall Street.[15]

There is no definite record of a Bible being used again at a swearing-in ceremony until James K. Polk's inauguration in 1845 (although it is believed that Andrew Jackson used one in 1829 and again in 1833). Since James Buchanan in 1857, every president has taken the oath on a Bible except for Theodore Roosevelt in 1901, when he was hastily sworn in after the assassination of William McKinley. Indeed, several modern presidents have used the same Bible as Washington, including Dwight Eisenhower, Jimmy Carter, and both George Bushes. The oldest inaugural Bible was the one used by Franklin Roosevelt in all four of his inaugurations. It was printed in Amsterdam around 1686 (in Dutch) and contained the Roosevelt family records—the earliest of which was the birth of Jacob Roosevelt in "1691/92." [16]

The page to which the Bible is opened during the administration of the oath is sometimes a random choice and sometimes a deliberate one. During Washington's first inauguration, it was randomly opened to Genesis 49–50. Rutherford B. Hayes placed his hand on Psalm 118:11–13, which reads in part: "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me." These words were significant, given the circumstances of Hayes's fiercely contested election. Franklin Roosevelt's Bible was opened to I Corinthians 13 for all four of his inaugurals ("Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass . . ."). Nixon, who entered office in the midst of the Vietnam War in 1969, placed his hand on Isaiah 2:4—"and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." [17]

After Washington's first inauguration, the oath of office was administered indoors until 1817. Washington's second inauguration, as well as that of John Adams, was held in Philadelphia in the Senate chamber of Independence Hall. Thomas Jefferson was the first president to be inaugurated in the District of Columbia, where in 1801 he took his oath in the new Senate chamber. In later years, the ceremony was moved to the House cham-

totaling over $35 billion.

Other presidents have been less successful at using public opinion. In September 1919 Woodrow Wilson undertook a cross-country crusade to promote U.S. entry into the League of Nations. After making dozens of speeches in twenty-nine cities across the Midwest and West, he became ill and returned to Washington, D.C., where he suffered a stroke on October 2. Despite Wilson's efforts, the public remained skeptical of an activist foreign policy, and the Republican-controlled Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League.

Jimmy Carter saw himself as a Washington outsider who enjoyed a direct relationship to the people that would help him to deal with Congress on contentious issues. Carter discovered, however, that his election victory and initial personal popularity—which exceeded 70 percent during his first months in office—did not translate into public enthusiasm for his programs. His expectations of being able to confront Congress with strong public backing led him to neglect executive-legislative relations and made passage of his programs more difficult.[31]

Extragovernmental Power

The president is indisputably the nation's first celebrity. One 1969-1970 survey found that 98 percent of adult Americans knew who was president, a much higher percentage of recognition than for any other public figure except the vice president, who was known by 87 percent. In contrast, only 57 percent knew the name of one senator from their state, and only 39 percent could identify their representative in the House of Representatives.[32]

Presidents, first ladies, and former occupants of the White House frequently head the list in "most admired person" polls. Most national radio and television news broadcasts will discuss the president's major activity of the day, and few adult Americans would not be able to recite some basic details about the president's personal and political background. Each year almost two million people, many of whom stand in line for more than an hour, visit the White House. Over nine million people tried to call the White House during President Carter's call-in radio press conference in 1977. This constant attention not only contributes to the president's political power it also gives presidents and their families great influence over national culture and attitudes.

Spiritual Leadership

Although one of the most cherished and accepted principles embodied in the U.S. Constitution is the separation between church and state, many Americans look upon presidents as moral and spiritual leaders. Presidents attend church services and national prayer breakfasts, address religious groups, discuss issues with religious leaders, and frequently invoke God in their speeches. Religious influence flows to presidents because they are the nation's foremost celebrities and the symbols of traditional American values. The moral and religious example they set affects the religious climate of the nation during their term.

The president's role as an unofficial spiritual leader was first exercised by George Washington, who said in his first inaugural address that

> it would be improper to omit in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the Universe. . . . No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men, more than the People of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.

Since then all presidents have mentioned God in their inaugural addresses.[33] Washington also added the words "so help me God" after the oath of office. Every president has followed Washington's example, thereby making an acknowledgement of God part of the president's first official act.

No self-proclaimed atheist has ever been elected president. Thomas Jefferson, who was accused of being one during the 1800 presidential campaign, asserted his faith in God in his inaugural address. He referred to "that Infinite power which rules the destinies of the universe" and "an overruling Providence."

Although Americans expect their president to profess a belief in God and occasionally participate in religious ceremonies and rituals, they are ambivalent about the president's religious role. The majority of Americans want their president to be a religious person, affirm religious values, and set a moral example, but they do not want the president to govern the country according to a private conception of God's will or to use the presidency to promote a specific religious faith. Carter, who considered himself a "born again" Christian, understood this ambivalence. He openly professed a deep faith in God but denied that he considered himself to be a religious leader.[34]

Above all, presidents are expected to take an ecumenical approach to religion that does not offend any faith with significant numbers of adherents. Eisenhower often professed his faith in God and spoke of the importance of religion in American society, but he was careful not to define God narrowly. In a 1959 speech to the National Council of Churches he stated that the spiritual unity of the West included not only Judeo-Christian traditions but also "the Mohammedans, the Buddhists and the rest; because they too, strongly believe that they achieve a right to human dignity because of their relationship to the Supreme Being."[35] Rather than promoting a particular faith, presidents have generally promoted the concept of religion and the basic values common to most religions.

Style

People want to know the details of the life of presidents and their families. Just as the British scan their newspapers and magazines for information about the royal family, the American public avidly follows the private lives of the first family, the closest American equivalent to royalty.

The national spotlight gives presidents and their families influence to affect the lifestyles and habits of Americans. Presidents will often spark new trends in clothing, foods, hobbies, or athletics even if they do not try to do so. Franklin Roosevelt increased the popularity of cigarette holders and scotty dogs. John Kennedy's preference for rocking chairs, which he favored because of his chronic back ailment, led many Americans to get one for their own home. Lyndon Johnson's taste for Mexican food convinced many Americans to try Mexican cuisine for the first time and stimulated the growth of fast food chains selling Mexican dishes. The company that manufactured Ronald Reagan's favorite kind of jelly bean reported that its sales

Inaugurals of Presidents of the United States: Some Precedents and Notable Events

Print Version

The information below has been compiled from contemporary accounts and other sources in the files of the Architect of the Capitol.

April 30, 1789 -- George Washington

- Oath of office taken out-of-doors (balcony of Federal Hall in New York City).
- Pronounced the words, "So help me God" after taking the oath; other presidents have followed this example.
- Set the precedent of kissing the Bible after the oath.
- Fireworks concluded the day's celebration, all of which was paid for by private citizens.
- Because of pressing public business, the inaugural ball was held on May 7. The president's wife, Martha, did not make the trip to New York.

March 4, 1793 -- George Washington

- Shortest inaugural address (135 words).

March 4, 1797 -- John Adams

- First president to receive the oath from the Chief Justice of the United States (Oliver Ellsworth).

March 4, 1801 -- Thomas Jefferson

- Began the custom of writing to Congress to accept the inauguration and arrange the time for the ceremonies.
- The first and probably only president to walk to and from his inaugural.
- First president to be inaugurated at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (in the Senate Chamber).
- First newspaper extra of an inaugural address, printed by the *National Intelligencer*.

March 5, 1805 -- Thomas Jefferson

March 4, 1809 -- James Madison

- First inaugural held in the Hall of the House.
- First inaugural ball to be held on the day of the inauguration.
- The United States Marine Band set a precedent by playing for the inaugural ball.

March 4, 1813 -- James Madison

March 5, 1817 -- James Monroe

- First president to take the oath out-of-doors in Washington.

March 4, 1821 -- James Monroe

March 4, 1825 -- John Q. Adams

- First president sworn in wearing long trousers.

March 4, 1829 -- Andrew Jackson

- First president to take the oath of office on the East Portico of the Capitol.

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The Historian's Response

The President's oath of office is detailed in Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution.

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

When George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on 30 April 1789 in New York City, he added the phrase, "So help me God" at the end of the oath of office. It has been in place ever since.

The U.S. Constitution says that Congress is the one to draft the oath for other federal officials according to Article VII. The Vice President takes the same oath of office as all other federal officials, including Members, Senators and House and Senate staff. This oath is prescribed by statute (5 U.S.C. 3331; I, 128)

"I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Facts and Firsts

Inauguration Date	President	Facts and Firsts
April 30, 1789	George Washington	First Inauguration; precedents set include the phrase, "So help me God," and kissing the Bible after taking the oath.
March 4, 1793	George Washington	First Inauguration in Philadelphia; delivered shortest Inaugural address at just 135 words.
March 4, 1797	John Adams	First to receive the oath of office from the Chief Justice of the United States.
March 4, 1801	Thomas Jefferson	First Inauguration in Washington, D.C.
March 4, 1809	James Madison	Inauguration held in the House chamber of the Capitol; first Inaugural ball held that evening.
March 4, 1817	James Monroe	First President to take the oath of office and deliver the Inaugural address outdoors; ceremony took place on platform in front of the temporary Brick Capitol (where Supreme Court now stands).
March 5, 1821	James Monroe	March 4, 1821 fell on a Sunday, so Monroe's Inauguration occurred the next day.
March 4, 1829	Andrew Jackson	First President to take the oath of office on the east front portico of the U.S. Capitol.
March 4, 1833	Andrew Jackson	Last time Chief Justice John Marshall administered the oath office; he presided over nine Inaugurations, from Adams to Jackson.
March 4, 1837	Martin Van Buren	First President who was not born a British subject; first time the President-elect and President rode to the Capitol for the Inauguration together.
March 4, 1841	William H. Harrison	First President to arrive in Washington by railroad; delivered the longest Inaugural address (8,445 words).
April 6, 1841	John Tyler	First Vice President to assume Presidency upon the death of the President.
March 4, 1845	James K. Polk	First Inauguration covered by telegraph; first known Inauguration featured in a newspaper illustration (*Illustrated London News*).
March 4, 1853	Franklin Pierce	First President to affirm the oath of office rather than swear it; cancelled the Inaugural ball.
March 4, 1857	James Buchanan	First Inauguration known to have been photographed.
March 4, 1861	Abraham Lincoln	Lincoln's calvary escort to the Capitol was heavily armed, providing unprecedented protection for the President-elect.

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The Evolution Of The Inauguration

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20, 2005

Fireworks like these are a traditional part of presidential inauguration festivities. (Photo: AP)

Library of Congress historian Dr. Marvin Kranz, speaking with **Bill Plante** (Photo: CBS/EARLY SHOW)

(CBS) Every four years, the inauguration of a president on Jan. 20 is a sign of enduring democracy, and a source of memorable images from our past.

CBS News White House Correspondent Bill Plante points out a little-known fact: Until a constitutional amendment in 1933, presidents were sworn in on March 4.

To explore the nation's rich inaugural history, Plante paid a visit to one of the foremost experts on the subject, Dr. Marvin Kranz of the **Library of Congress**.

"All the elements that we see at the current time for an inauguration, they're there with George Washington," Kranz tells Plante. Washington started it all, Kranz says.

The first inaugural ceremony took place in 1789 at New York City's Federal Hall. General George Washington recited the constitutional oath of office over a Bible borrowed, at the last minute, from a local Masonic lodge. But Washington made one small change.

"He put his left hand on the Bible and (raised his) right hand, (and) he took the oath, and after he took the official oath he said, 'So help me, God,' and since that time, other presidents have done that and most presidents since that time have used the Bible."

Harry Truman also kissed the Bible, as did Washington.

George W. Bush wanted to use Washington's Bible at **his first**

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The **CBS News** Political Unit's guide to the week's events (.pdf format).

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Inaugural History

Inauguration 2001

Deeply rooted in tradition, the presidential inauguration marks a new beginning for both the United States and its brand new president. Beginning with General George Washington's 1789 inauguration in New York City, many presidents have added their own unique traditions that will continue into 2001.

The oath of office is the main focus of the inauguration ceremony and the only part required by law. In Article II, Section 1, of the U.S. Constitution, the founding fathers provided an oath of office for the President-elect's official swearing in. This 35-word vow has not changed since the 18th century.

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will try to the best of my ability, to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Washington's 1789 Inaugural
Courtesy: Mt. Vernon Ladies' Assn.

George Washington added the phrase "so help me God" to the end of his oath, and almost every president has added it since. He also followed his swearing-in with the first inaugural address -- another tradition most presidents have also adopted.

"The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people," Washington said.

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Precedents and Notable Events of Past Inaugurations From the Library of Congress

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The Oath

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve protect, and defend the Constitution of the Unites States."

Those words will only have been uttered 53 times after Bill Clinton takes his second oath of office today. George Washington was the first and he set a precedent for all his successors by tagging the phrase "so help me God," to the end of the 35-word pledge.

Franklin Pierce, in 1853, has been the only president to "affirm" the oath, rather than "swear."

back to the top / next

The Bible

The Constitution does not require that the president swear the oath on a Bible, but President Washington was once again a trend-setter by placing his left hand on one while raising his right. With the exception of Theodore Roosevelt, who was quickly sworn in after the assasination of William McKinley, every president since James Buchanan in 1857 has taken the oath with his hand on the Bible.

The page of the Bible the president chooses to be open is

Front Page
World
Africa
Americas
Asia-Pacific
Europe
Middle East
South Asia
From Our Own Correspondent
Letter From America
UK
UK Politics
Business
Sci/Tech
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Friday, 19 January, 2001, 17:53 GMT

Guide to the inauguration ceremony

George W Bush's inauguration as the 43rd president of the United States follows a long tradition that has become an elaborate part of the political and social calendar.

It is no longer just a swearing-in ceremony, but a huge money-spinner and a tourist event that the whole country is encouraged to take part in - whether on television or at the ceremony itself.

For those with the money, there are balls and galas across Washington. The most exclusive cost $1,250 a ticket.

But other people wanting to capture a slice of history may have to settle for a pack of playing cards perhaps, or a commemorative car

Saturday's schedule

- **1545 GMT: Bushes and Clintons leave White House for Capitol Hill**
- **1650 GMT: Dick Cheney sworn in as vice-president**
- **1659 GMT: George Bush sworn in as president**
- **1830 GMT: Parade starts**
- **1930 GMT: Bush motorcade joins**

Click for full coverage

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licence plate - all for sale at the official gift shop website.

For $260 you can order a panoramic photo of Mr Bush taking his oath ("a proud addition to every American's home or office"), or for $99, you might want a presidential pen set.

Bible hunt

George W Bush's inaugural parade involves 37 marching bands from high schools and colleges nationwide, plus six military bands.

But the presidential inauguration started with just 36 words, set down in the constitution:

I do solemnly swear/affirm that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend, the constitution of the United States.

The constitution mentions nothing of an inaugural address, parades, balls and the other activities that are now expected. It does not even decree that the president must place a hand on the bible while taking the oath.

That tradition, like many others, began with the first US President, George Washington.

Other countries like to cash in too

When he was first sworn into office, there was a scramble to find a bible after the chief justice of the New York state judiciary determined that an oath without a bible would lack legitimacy.

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But none could be found in Federal Hall in New York City where the first swearing in was held. A bible had to be borrowed from a Masonic lodge a few blocks away.

The constitution sets out the words that every president must say, but it was George Washington who began the practice of adding the words "so help me God".

And after taking the oath of office, Mr Washington stepped into the Senate chambers and delivered a brief speech, giving rise to the tradition of the inaugural address.

But since then there have been many changes.

The first inauguration to be...

- **photographed - 1857, James Buchanan**
- **broadcast on radio - 1925, Calvin Coolidge**
- **televised - 1949, Harry Truman**
- **broadcast live on the internet - 1997, Bill Clinton**

For one thing, the inauguration moved from New York to Philadelphia and finally to Washington, when Thomas Jefferson took the oath of office in 1801.

The inauguration was held inside until 1817 when it was moved outdoors.

That year, James Monroe was sworn in on the east portico of the Capitol. It remained there until Ronald Reagan moved the ceremony to the west side of the Capitol in 1981, where it remains in 2001.

Pomp and parades

Parades have always been a part of the inauguration, but they started off as relatively modest affairs.

The trend for ever-larger parades began with the first organised parade in 1809 when the cavalry escorted James Madison.

National Review Online.....print version

Byron York
NR White House Correspondent

Godless Democrats?

The battle over "So help me God."

August 2, 2001 11:50 a.m.

After the power shift in the Senate, Jeff Sessions, the Republican from Alabama who sits on the Judiciary Committee, noticed something funny about the way Bush administration nominees were sworn in for testimony during their confirmation hearings. Everybody knows the drill; the nominee stands and listens while the chairman says, "Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" The nominee says, "I do" and the testimony begins.

That's the way it's been done by Republicans and Democrats for as long as anyone can remember. But when Patrick Leahy became chairman of the committee, he began administering the oath in a slightly different way. He kept the part about swearing or affirming. He kept the part about the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But he left off *so help you God*.

It happened over and over. Sessions and his staff listened as Leahy administered oaths to Bush judicial nominees William Riley, Sam Haddon, and Richard Cebull. No *so help you God*. He listened as Leahy gave the oath to Justice Department nominees Sarah Hart, Deborah Daniels, Asa Hutchinson, and Robert Mueller. No *so help you God*. Sessions even went back to January, during the brief period when Democrats controlled the committee, to check the oath Leahy administered to attorney general John Ashcroft. No *so help you God*.

In fact, it appeared that Leahy used *so help you God* only once, in the oath administered to Roger Gregory, the federal judge nominated by Bill Clinton and re-nominated by George W. Bush.

Sessions was curious — and disturbed. "When a nominee says, 'so help me God,' whether a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim or an adherent to another faith, he knows that he is morally bound to tell the truth," Sessions said in a statement. "To remove this moral obligation from the oath would undermine the critical truth-finding process in every hearing in Congress and every courtroom in America."

The senator looked into the history of the oath. The words *so help me God* were first added to the oath of office by George Washington and have been spoken by every president since. They are part of the oath taken by senators when they are sworn into office. They were part of the oaths administered by previous Judiciary Committee chairman Orrin Hatch, Joseph Biden, Edward Kennedy, and others. But there is no legally prescribed oath given to nominees and witnesses who appear before Congress. As chairman of the committee, Leahy is free to include *so help you God* or leave it out at his pleasure.

Sessions brought the matter up this morning at a committee business meeting on Capitol Hill, but encountered no resistance from Leahy. "I didn't realize we weren't using the traditional oath," Leahy said. "I'll correct myself, and I thank the senator for pointing it out." When Sessions continued to stress the importance of the oath, Leahy said, "If somebody lies before my committee, no matter what oath they take, to God, or Allah, or whether they swear or affirm, I'll turn it over to the Justice Department for

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January 18, 2001

Inaugural Facts about the First "George W"

- George Washington's Campaign: George Washington did not campaign for the Presidency in 1789 - in fact, he did not want to be president, wishing instead to remain in peaceful retirement at Mount Vernon. But, when duty called - he could not refuse.

- Indecision 1789: The votes of the electors in our first presidential election took over two months to tally. Although everyone assumed Washington would be elected, he refused to give any inclination about his acceptance until the votes were tallied and he was officially notified of his nomination.

- Unanimous Election: George Washington is the only president to be elected UNANIMOUSLY to the office of President, not just once - but twice.

- Washington's Inaugural Parade: During Washington's 9-day inaugural journey to New York from Mount Vernon, he was greeted in every town by crowds and ceremony. Inauguration Day (April 30, 1789) began with church bells ringing, and a military escort and full ceremonial procession to Federal Hall-followed by a military contingent of 500 including infantry and a company of Scottish Highlanders. The day continued with a visit to St. Paul's Episcopal Church and ended with fireworks.

- Washington's Oath of Office: After placing his hand on a Masonic Bible borrowed from the nearby St. John's Lodge (will be used by George W. Bush-was also used by senior George Bush), Washington took the oath, adding the words, "So help me God," now an essential part of the Oath of Office taken by every President of the United States.

- Washington's Inaugural Wardrobe: In celebration of America's domestic industries, Washington insisted on wearing a suit made "In the USA." He wore a dark brown suit with brass buttons decorated with eagles, dress sword, and shoes with plain silver buckles.

- The First First Lady on Inauguration Day: Martha Washington did not attend her husband's first inauguration - she arrived in New York at a later date.

- Washington's Presidential Title: If the Senate had gotten its way, the President of the United States may have been forever known as "His Elective Highness" or "His High Mightiness, the President of the United States and the Protector of their Liberties," instead of simply, "Mr. President."

- Washington's Inaugural Speech: In Washington's first inaugural speech, he lamented his lack of qualifications, endorsed the new Constitution and stated his intent to allow Congress to direct its own

affairs without interference from the Presidential Branch. Washington delivered his speech nervously, quietly, and uncomfortably. His second inaugural speech is the shortest in history, only two paragraphs long.

- Washington's Inauguration Song: The President's March was composed in 1789 by Philip Phile, a Hessian soldier-musician who was captured at Trenton and remained in America after the Revolutionary War. Likely played on Inauguration Day, this song was often played in honor of Washington throughout his presidency.

- Washington's Inaugural Balls: Washington did not attend any inaugural balls in 1789 but held several Levees (Presidential dinners) throughout his presidency at his presidential mansion in New York and then in Philadelphia.

- Washington's Refusal to serve a third term: The inauguration of John Adams proved the democratic ideal of a peaceful transition of power, a necessary precedent for Washington to set to avoid advocating life-long presidential terms.

- Washington's Presidential Mansion: Washington lived in a presidential mansion provided for him through Congress in New York, and then in the new capital: Philadelphia. Washington never lived in the White House, but he was intimately involved in picking Washington, DC as the new capital city and in the design of the White House. Washington knew that the new capital would be named after him, but died before he could experience that honor.

Detailed info can be found on their online Press Room at www.mountvernon.org.
For Additional Details, Contact: Jennie Saxon, Mount Vernon's Media Office. Phone (703) 799-8607

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US Inaugurations Mix Tradition with Change

By Nancy Beardsley
Washington
18 January 2005

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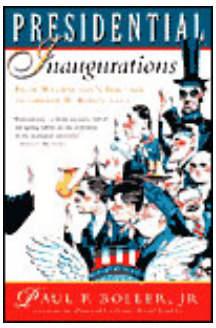
The United States Constitution says little about Presidential inaugurations, except to state the oath of office...the words that have been repeated by American Presidents for more than two centuries. But even if the speeches, parades and parties that surround that oath are not required by law, they have become time-honored traditions, many dating back to America's earliest days as a nation.



Paul F. Boller, Jr., author of *Presidential Inaugurations*, notes that the United States was launching an experiment in self-government when the first inauguration took place. "The Founding Fathers thought it was important to have a ceremony when they installed George Washington in office," says Mr. Boller. "Of course I think they also wanted to honor Washington. They felt that without him to start off this experiment they wouldn't have much of a chance."

That first Presidential inauguration took place in New York, on April 30th, 1789. The ceremony was later moved to the new capital city of Washington, D.C., and January 20th eventually became Inauguration Day to reduce the gap between Election Day in November and the start of a new administration. But, in other ways, George Washington's inauguration became a model for those that followed.

"Washington was driven in a coach to the Congress," explains Paul Boller. "That was one precedent, that now you've got two branches of government involved. And then he decided to take the oath on the Bible. That was common in those days for taking oaths. Then he said 'So help me God,' afterwards. That was his innovation. And then he decided to give an inaugural address giving the aims of this new country. And then he attended a dinner with friends and watched fireworks. Those few simple things, they became standard."

In 1809, James Madison hosted the first inaugural ball, and soon Presidents were staging a round of parties and receptions to celebrate their arrival at the White House. One of the most famous inaugural parties took place when Andrew Jackson became President in 1829. Mr. Jackson had campaigned as a leader for everyday people. "So he invited them all to the White House for a reception after he took his oath of office," says Mr. Boller, "and they came in big mobs. People stood on the furniture with muddy boots to see him, and when waiters came in bringing food, people started fighting over food. Jackson finally escaped through the window. And this shocked dignified people. They said, 'This is democracy

Lithograph of the 1829 inauguration of Andrew Jackson - courtesy Library of Congress

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getting out of hand.' But other people said, 'No, this is just the American people, showing their enthusiasm for government.'"

1873 Inaugural ball for Ulysses S. Grant - courtesy Library of Congress

Inaugurations turned even more festive in 1873, when Ulysses S. Grant became the first President to hold an inaugural parade. "It tended to be a military parade," Paul Boller explains. "This was not long after the Civil War, and General Grant was the great Union commander. But after that civilians quickly began to be added to the afternoon parade. There would be governors, senators and other prominent people, and then high school students, college students. And then you began to get floats and even circus animals -- elephants and things like that."

Not all inaugurations have gone off quite as planned. Some have been marred by freezing weather. Others have been disrupted by protestors. But U.S. Presidents aim to make the day a time for celebration and unity -- and those who give a stirring inaugural speech can leave a lasting legacy. Paul Boller counts John F. Kennedy's 1961 address as among the most famous. "It spends most of its time on foreign affairs," he says. "It's very much a Cold War inauguration. Kennedy promises that the American people will do everything they can to stop communism from spreading, and defend freedom around the world."

U.S. Presidential inaugurations have also gotten longer, more elaborate and more costly. "By the late nineteenth century," Paul Boller notes, "you go from one day to two or three or four or five or even a week. You have all sorts of things added to it beforehand -- the recitals, plays, galas, big variety shows, cocktail parties, lunches, dinners. It goes on and on."

But none of that would be possible without the swearing-in ceremony that lasts just a few minutes and includes only a few brief words. It is the oath of office, says Paul Boller, that turns a U.S. President-elect into a President.

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THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

History & Exhibits

FEATURED HISTORICAL ARTICLES

Presidential Inaugurations: The Capitol Connection

The inauguration of a President is a cyclical, regularly scheduled event held every four years. The regularity of Presidential Inaugurations lends a sense of reassuring stability, continuity, and permanence to a political system that permits turnover in officeholders and change in policy agendas. Moreover, it is a peaceful change in government, unlike the violence that so often has accompanied a change in head of state elsewhere.

The oath is administered, normally when weather permits, outside, in the presence of the public--the electorate who chose the President. The President-elect and Vice-President elect are surrounded by the Members of Congress, past and present, Justices of the Supreme Court, members of the diplomatic corps, and other dignitaries as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court administers the oath of office. In this way, all three branches of the federal government and the public they serve are symbolically linked in this ritual of renewal and reaffirmation.

Courtesy of USCHS

1789: George Washington's First Inauguration

The administration of the oath of office as a ritual of reaffirmation combines the worlds of the sacred and the profane--or in other terms--religion and ideology. The oath, as specified by the Constitution: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States," is sworn as the President-elect lays his hand upon an open Bible.

Prior to 1937, Inauguration Day was set on March 4th (first by act of Continental Congress, September 13, 1788, and then by act of Congress, March 1, 1792; except when March 4th fell on a Sunday, public ceremony Monday). The first inauguration, however, didn't take place on March 4, 1789, but nearly two months later on April 30th.

Because Congress met in Federal Hall in New York City, Washington went there to take the oath of

office on April 30th. He went to the Senate Chamber on the second floor, where he was escorted out to the balcony to take the oath. Because no Supreme Court justices had been appointed, the oath was administered by Robert Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York. The Bible used in the ceremony had been borrowed from nearby St. John's Masonic Lodge when none could be found in Federal Hall. After repeating the 35-word oath, Washington added, "I swear, so help me God." Livingston raised the Bible, Washington bent over and kissed it, and Livingston turned to the crowd and said, "Long live George Washington, President of the United States." The flag was raised, artillery fired, and all the church bells rung. The President then went back into the building and delivered his inaugural address in the Senate Chamber before both Houses of Congress.

1801: Jefferson's First Inaugural

The first inauguration to take place at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., was one of the most significant in our history. Thomas Jefferson's March 4, 1801, inauguration was the first instance in which the presidency changed political parties. It was also the result of the first time an election had to be decided by the House of Representatives. Jefferson and Aaron Burr tied in the electoral college vote, and the House did not break the tie in Jefferson's favor until only two weeks before Inauguration Day. President John Adams left town, rather than go through another humiliation. Only one wing of the Capitol, the old Senate wing, had been completed, and the swearing-in ceremony was scheduled for the Senate chamber.

Jefferson walked the short distance from his lodgings at Conrad and McMunn's boardinghouse on New Jersey Avenue. Adams had left seven horses and two carriages at the White House stables, but Jefferson preferred to walk, escorted by several members of Congress and a crowd of onlookers. He had earlier written to Chief Justice John Marshall asking him to administer the oath and to see if the oath prescribed in the Constitution was the only one he had to take. Marshall, who also was acting Secretary of State under Adams, said he would be happy to administer the oath and that as far as he could determine the oath prescribed by the Constitution was the only one he needed to take.
The semicircular Senate Chamber was crowded with an estimated 1,000 spectators (I find this report hard to believe) as Jefferson gave his inaugural address, carefully worded to reassure his Federalist opponents that the federal government would continue. "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists," he said. One of his listeners, Margaret Bayard Smith, wrote her sister about the event: "I have this morning witnessed one of the most interesting scenes a free people can ever witness. The changes of administration, which in every government and in every age have most generally been epochs of confusion, villainy or bloodshed, in this our happy country take place without any species of distraction or disorder."

Chief Justice Marshall administered the oath following Jefferson's inaugural address. The new President, accompanied by Vice President Burr, Chief Justice Marshall, and others walked back to Jefferson's boardinghouse, where he received citizens who called on him. At dinner, Jefferson insisted on sitting at his usual spot at the foot of the table, furthest from the warmth of the fireplace. Jefferson's second inaugural was distinguished by the first inaugural parade, an impromptu, spontaneous procession that escorted Jefferson down Pennsylvania Avenue back to the White House.

1829: Jackson's Inauguration

In 1829 the inauguration of Andrew Jackson as the seventh President of the United States moved the ceremony to the East Portico of the Capitol.

Because of the crowd at the Capitol's east front, Jackson entered the Capitol through the west front basement door. A ship's cable had been stretched across the east front stairs to keep the crowd back. One eyewitness recorded:

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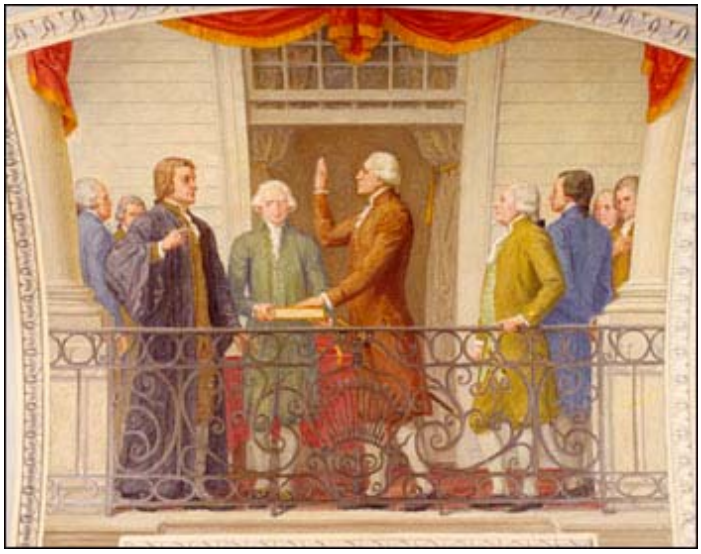

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APPENDIX H

Supreme Court Opinions Claiming that George Washington Added "so help me God" to the Presidential Oath of Office on April 30, 1789

(1) McCreary County v. ACLU, 545 U.S. 844, 886 (2005) (Scalia, J., dissenting) ("George Washington added to the form of Presidential oath prescribed by Art. II, § 1, cl. 7, of the Constitution, the concluding words 'so help me God.'")

(2) Elk Grove Unified Sch. Dist. v. Newdow, 542 U.S. 1, 26 (2004) (Rehnquist, C.J., concurring) ("At George Washington's first inauguration on April 30, 1789, he ... 'responded, "I solemnly swear," and repeated the oath, adding, "So help me God."'") (citation omitted)

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Law Review Articles Claiming that George Washington Added "so help me God" to the Presidential Oath of Office on April 30, 1789

(1) Lisa Shaw Roy. *History, Transparency, and the Establishment Clause: A Proposal for Reform*, 112 Penn St. L. Rev. 683, 729 (n.149) (2008)

(2) Vincent Phillip Munoz. *Thou Shalt Not Post the Ten Commandments? McCreary, Van Orden, and the Future of Religious Display Cases*, 10 Tex. Rev. Law & Pol. 357, 376 (2006)

(3) Jay Alan Sekulow and Erik Michael Zimmerman. *How McCreary County v. ACLU Illustrates the Need to Reexamine the Lemon Test and Its Purpose Prong*, 23 T.M. Cooley L. Rev. 25, 54 (2006)

(4) Christopher B. Harwood. *Evaluating the Supreme Court's Establishment Clause Jurisprudence in the Wake of Van Orden v. Perry and McCreary County v. ACLU*, 71 Mo. L. Rev. 317, 333 (2006)

(5) Thomas B. Colby, *A Constitutional Hierarchy of Religions? Justice Scalia, The Ten Commandments, and the Future of the Establishment Clause*, 100 Nw. U.L. Rev. 1097, 1105 (2006)

(6) Amit Patel, *The Orthodoxy Opening Predicament: The Crumbling Wall of Separation Between Church and State*, 83 U. Det. Mercy L. Rev. 195, 214 (2006)

(7) Charles I. Lugosi, *The Rejection of Divine Law in American Jurisprudence: The Ten Commandments, Trivia, and the Stars and Stripes*, 83 U. Det. Mercy L. Rev. 641, 644 (2006)

(8) Robin Charlow. *The Elusive Meaning of Religious Equality*. 83 Wash. U. L. Q. 1529, 1566 (n.77) (2005)

(9) Hiroaki Kobayashi, *Religion in the Public Sphere: Challenges and Opportunities in Japan*, 2005 B.Y.U.L. Rev. 683, 710 (n.58) (2005)

(10) Robert F. Blomquist, *The Presidential Oath, the American National Interest and a Call for Presiprudence*, 73 UMKC L. Rev. 1, 34 (2004)[1]

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[1] As if to demonstrate how easily history can be altered, Professor Blomquist is among those who have actually embellished the myth, claiming, "**every president has followed the lead** of George Washington in adding the words 'so help me God' after the formal, prescribed constitutional oath." (Emphasis added.) See also, the National Endowment for the Humanities (Four words not prescribed by the Constitution have been **part of every**

(11) Eric G. Andersen, *Three Degrees of Promising*, 2003 B.Y.U.L. Rev. 829, 847 (2003)

(12) Elizabeth A. Brooks, *Thou Shalt Not Quote the Bible: Determining the Propriety of Attorney Use of Religious Philosophy and Themes in Oral Arguments*, 33 Ga. L. Rev. 1113, 1180 (n.21 (1999)

(13) James E. Pfander, *So Help Me God: Religion and Presidential Oath-Taking*, 16 Const. Commentary 549, 551 (1999)

(14) Kurt T. Lash. *Power and the Subject of Religion*, 59 Ohio St. L.J. 1069, 1123 (1998)

(15) Daniel L. Dreisbach, *In Search of a Christian Commonwealth: An Examination of Selected Nineteenth-Century Commentaries on References to God and the Christian Religion in the United States Constitution*, 48 Baylor L. Rev. 927, 983-984 (1996)

(16) Steven B. Epstein, *Rethinking the Constitutionality of Ceremonial Deism*, 96 Colum. L. Rev. 2083, 2108 (1996)

(17) David M. Smolin, *The Religious Voice in the Public Square: Cracks in the Mirrored Prison: An Evangelical Critique of Secularist Academic and Judicial Myths Regarding the Relationship of Religion and American Politics*, 29 Loy. L.A. L. Rev. 1487, 1503 (1996)

(18) Carl H. Esbeck. *A Restatement of the Supreme Court's Law of Religious Freedom: Coherence, Conflict, or Chaos?*, 70 Notre Dame L. Rev. 581, 650 (n.83) (1995)

(19) Ralph W. Johnson III, *Lee v. Weisman: Easy Cases can Make Bad Law Too -- The "Direct Coercion" Test is the Appropriate Establishment Clause Standard*, 2 Geo. Mason Ind. L. Rev. 123, 182 (1993)

President's oath. At his 1789 inaugural, Washington added, "So help me, God." Every subsequent President has also added that phrase.”) (Emphasis added); Office of the Historian of the House of Representatives (“When George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on 30 April 1789 in New York City, he added the phrase, “So help me God” at the end of the oath of office. **It has been in place ever since.**”). (Emphasis added).

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Books Claiming that George Washington Added "so help me God" to the Presidential Oath of Office on April 30, 1789

(1) Bendat J. *Democracy's Big Day 2005 Edition: The Inauguration of Our President* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse; 2004), at 17

(2) Davis K. *Don't Know Much About History* (New York: Harper, Collins; 1990/2003) at 288

(3) McCollister JC. *So Help Me God: The Faith of America's Presidents* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press; 1991), at 11

(4) Riccards M. *A Republic, If You Can Keep It: The Foundation of the American Presidency, 1700-1800* (New York: Greenwood Press; 1987) at 73-74.

(5) *Centennial Anniversary of Washington's Inauguration (Proceedings in the First Parish Meeting-House, at Groton, Massachusetts)* (Cambridge, MA: University Press; 1889), at 16

(6) Lossing BJ. *A Household History for All Readers, From the Discovery of America to the Present Time* (New York: Johnson & Miles; 1877), Book V at 1124

(7) Devens RM Our First Century: Being a Popular Descriptive Portraiture ... (Springfield, MA: C.A. Nichols & Co.; 1876), at 144

(8) Lossing BJ. *Washington and the American Republic* (New York: Virtue & Yorston; 1870), Volume III at 94

(9) Wedgwood WB. *The reconstruction of the government of the United States of America: a Democratic empire advocated, and and imperial constitution proposed* (New York: John H. Tingley; 1861), at 8.