



*The honor of your presence
is requested at the ceremonies attending the
Inauguration of the
President and Vice President
of the United States*

*January twentieth
Two thousand and nine*

*The Capitol of the United States of America
City of Washington*

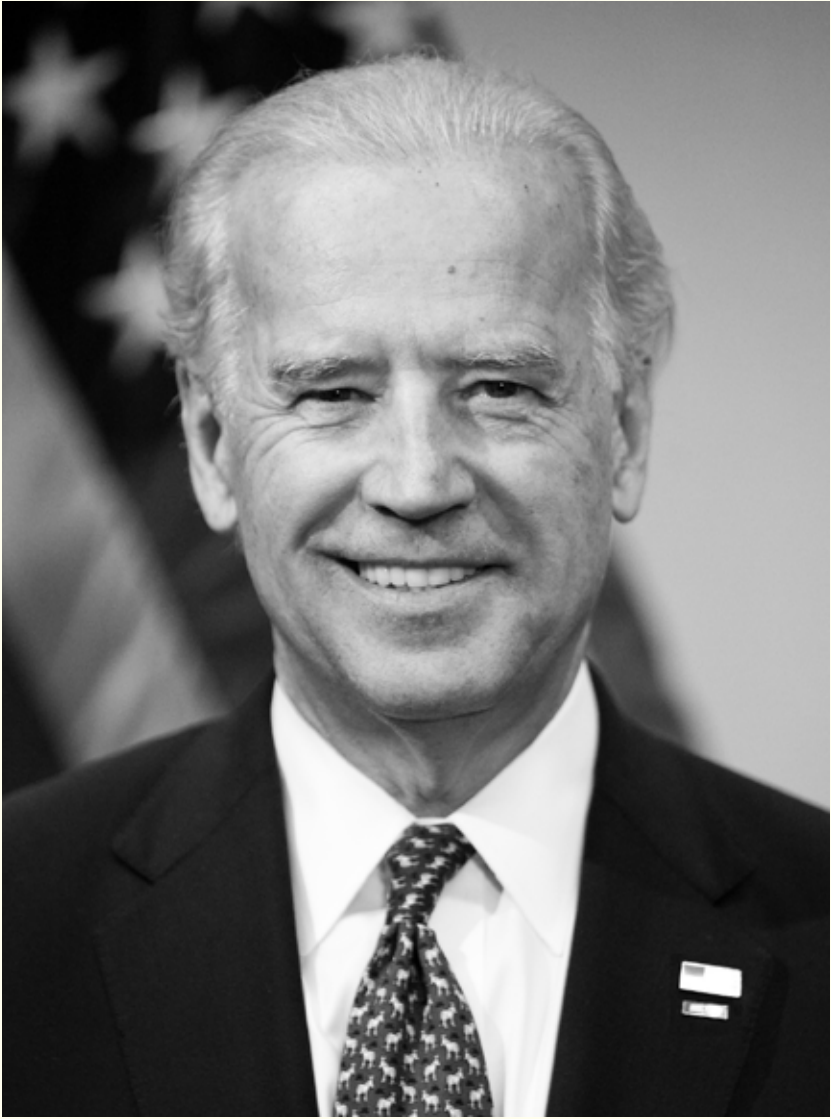
*by the
Joint Congressional
Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies*

*Dianne Feinstein, Chairman,
Harry Reid, Robert F. Bennett,
Nancy Pelosi, Steny H. Hoyer,
John A. Boehner*

11:30 a.m.



Barack Obama



Joseph L. Biden, Jr.



Inauguration Ceremonies
Program

The Capitol of the United States of America

January twentieth
Two thousand and nine

*Inauguration
of the
President and Vice President
of the
United States of America*

The Capitol of the United States of America

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*The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies cordially
welcomes you to the fifty-sixth Presidential Inauguration.*

Dianne Feinstein, Chairman

U.S. SENATE, CALIFORNIA

Harry Reid

MAJORITY LEADER, U.S. SENATE, NEVADA

Robert F. Bennett

U.S. SENATE, UTAH

Nancy Pelosi

SPEAKER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, CALIFORNIA

Steny H. Hoyer

MAJORITY LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARYLAND

John A. Boehner

REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OHIO



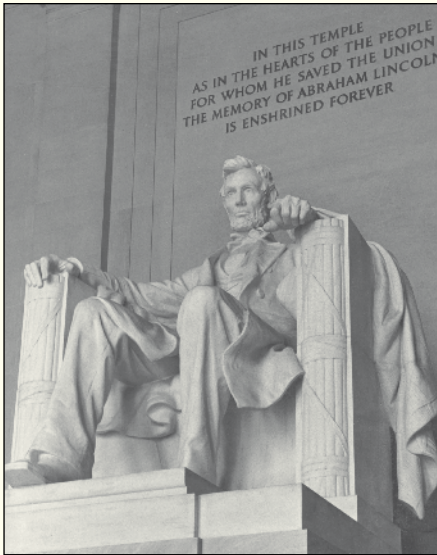
*T*he fifty-sixth Presidential Inauguration celebrates the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth and the ideals of renewal, continuity, and unity that he so often expressed. As we have done every four years since 1789, Americans join together today to witness our President take a simple oath of office consisting of thirty-five words. This historic event provides an occasion for all Americans to rededicate themselves to the principles that are the foundation of our representative democracy.

Framed against a backdrop of red, white, and blue bunting, the West Front of the United States Capitol features five flags. The flag of the United States is displayed in the center. On either side are two earlier flags: the flag popularly known as the "Betsy Ross flag," with stars arranged in a circle, appeared in the early 1790s; the flag with twenty-one stars flew for one year from July 4, 1819, to July 4, 1820, in recognition of the entrance of Illinois into the Union.

“A New Birth of Freedom”

The 2009 Presidential Inauguration

The Presidential Inauguration of 2009 takes place as the nation prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. The President-elect takes the oath of office and addresses the nation from the West Front of the United States Capitol, looking across the National Mall toward the Lincoln Memorial, where many of the sixteenth President’s immortal words are inscribed. Although some inaugural traditions have



LINCOLN MEMORIAL.
photograph by Philip Gendreau
*Smithsonian American Art Museum,
Photograph Archives*

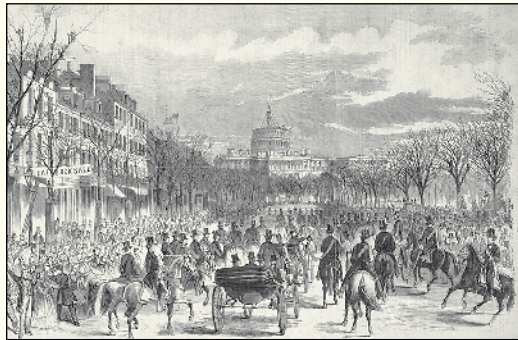
changed since Lincoln’s time, the swearing-in ceremony continues to symbolize the ideals of renewal, continuity, and unity that he so often expressed.

Born in Kentucky on February 12, 1809, and raised in Indiana and Illinois, Abraham Lincoln became a frontier lawyer who served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives before his inauguration as President. He faced the severest test of any chief executive and rose to meet the challenge with inspired leadership that carried the nation through the Civil War. His Presidency is honored for reuniting the North and

South and emancipating the enslaved, for promoting settlement of the West through homesteading and improved transportation, and for providing educational opportunity through land-grant colleges. Lincoln is also remembered for his plain but eloquent language, exemplified by his two inaugural addresses and the Gettysburg Address, from which today’s inaugural theme is taken.

At his inauguration on March 4, 1861, Lincoln first attended the swearing-in of Vice President Hannibal Hamlin in the Senate Chamber. Lincoln then proceeded to the East Front portico of the Capitol for his own oath-taking. His chief opponent in the 1860 election, Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas, held Lincoln's stovepipe hat during the ceremony as a gesture of reconciliation. Senator Edward Dickinson Baker, who would later die in combat while leading troops at the Battle of Ball's Bluff, introduced the President-elect to the assembled crowd. Chief Justice Roger Taney, appointed a quarter of a century earlier by President Andrew Jackson, administered the oath of office. Behind them, the original copper-covered wooden Capitol dome had been removed and a larger cast-iron dome stood half completed.

Called upon to lead the nation at its most divisive moment, Lincoln sought to unite people by appealing to their "better angels." He denied the inevitability of war and called for caution and patience. Above all, Lincoln hoped for peaceful resolution and common purpose, insisting, "We are not enemies, but friends." The President delivered his address in a voice that observers said "rang out over the acres of people before him with surprising distinctness, and was heard in the remotest parts of his audience." His first inaugural address concluded with an evocative image: "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."



ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE ON HIS WAY TO THE CAPITOL TO BE INAUGURATED, 1861.

FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER, 03/16/1861

U.S. Senate Collection



THE FIRST READING OF THE EMANCIPATION
PROCLAMATION BEFORE THE CABINET, 1866.

by Alexander Hay Ritchie after painting by Francis Bicknell Carpenter
U.S. Senate Collection

Throughout his Presidency, Abraham Lincoln sought to reunite the nation not only by restoring what had previously existed, but also by moving forward in the spirit of the Constitution toward “a more perfect union.” In September 1862 and January 1863, he issued emancipation proclamations that freed

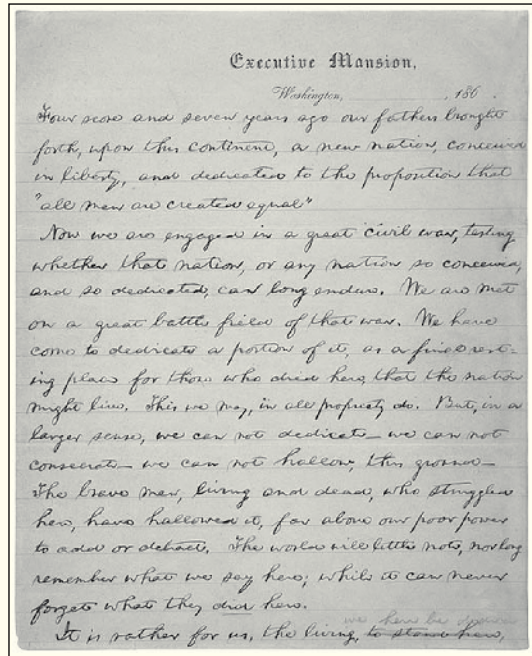
the slaves in the states that had seceded. These were the first steps toward passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 that permanently abolished any form of involuntary servitude in the United States. The Proclamation recalled the assertion of the Declaration of Independence that all are created equal and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” In one of the nation’s darkest moments, his words and actions reiterated its loftiest goals.

Lincoln repeated those sentiments in his most memorable address at the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863. Mindful of the fearsome price paid in human life to restore and preserve the Union, Lincoln again called for unity and reconciliation. Although uttered at the dedication of a battlefield memorial to those whose lives had been lost, he suggested that the ground on which they stood was already sacred. “The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.” Just 272 words in length, the Gettysburg Address encapsulates Lincoln’s persistent efforts to explain the necessity of preserving the Union and to turn the nation’s attention

toward a future “dedicated to the great task remaining before us.” He asked the nation to pledge itself to finishing the duty for which so many had sacrificed, “that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

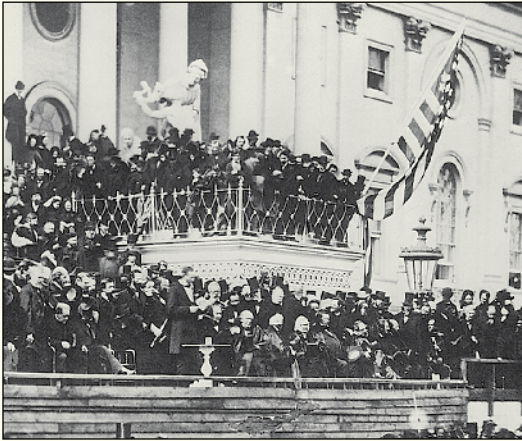
On a cold, rainy March 4, 1865, Lincoln returned to the Capitol for his second inauguration. By then, the Capitol dome as we know it had been completed, a symbol of

the continuity of the U.S. government and American representative democracy. The large crowd that gathered on the East Front plaza, despite the bad weather, watched the President take the oath of office, this time from Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, whom he had appointed. They heard Lincoln deliver one of the shortest inaugural addresses in history, just 703 words. Yet it was also one of the most meaningful speeches in American history. Lincoln took note of “the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation,” but anticipated an era in which the United States would promote a lasting peace at home and abroad. He reviewed the course of the war and prayed along with other Americans “that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.” He concluded in a spirit of humility and resolve, and again expressed goals of unity



ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S HANDWRITTEN COPY OF THE
GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, 1863.

Library of Congress, Manuscript Division



ABRAHAM LINCOLN DELIVERING HIS SECOND
INAUGURAL ADDRESS, 1865.

photograph by Alexander Gardner

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

and reconciliation: “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Since Lincoln’s time, the Presidential Inauguration has undergone significant alterations. The Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1933, changed the date of the ceremony from March 4 to January 20, thereby reducing the span of time between a President’s election and the commencement of the new administration. In January 1981, Congress moved the inaugural ceremonies to the Capitol’s West Front, where the broad terraces serve as the inaugural platform, and where much larger space is available for the public to view the proceedings. The event is broadcast and digitally streamed across the nation and around the world. Despite such changes, the inaugural ceremonies continue to bring together the three branches of the federal government, with the magnificent backdrop of the gleaming white Capitol dome, for an event that represents the purposes and ideals that Abraham Lincoln so often expressed, for national renewal, continuity, and unity.