

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

*at the National Capitol  
January twentieth  
Nineteen hundred eighty-nine*



**W**ELCOME to the BICENTENNIAL PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL. In commemoration of this historic occasion, the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies has incorporated symbols of this nation's past and present into today's ceremony.

The inaugural platform is framed against a backdrop of red, white and blue, featuring flags from 1789, 1889 and 1989. The archway of the West Front terrace door, where the President and Vice President enter, is draped in bunting similar to that used at New York City's Federal Hall for George Washington's first inaugural in 1789.

The seal gracing the cover of the inaugural program and invitation is the First Great Seal of the United States, commissioned by the Continental Congress in 1776 and used by the new American government from 1789 to 1841. The First Great Seal was designed as visible evidence of a sovereign nation and a free people with high aspirations and grand hopes for the future.

The Bicentennial Inaugural that we celebrate today is living proof that those high aspirations and grand hopes not only have been achieved, but still endure.

WENDELL H. FORD, *Chairman*, U.S. Senate, Kentucky.  
GEORGE J. MITCHELL, U.S. Senate, Maine.  
TED STEVENS, U.S. Senate, Alaska.  
JIM WRIGHT, *Speaker*, U.S. House of Representatives, Texas.  
THOMAS S. FOLEY, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington.  
ROBERT H. MICHEL, U.S. House of Representatives, Illinois.

*Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies*

## PROGRAM

### PRELUDE

THE UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
COLONEL JOHN R. BOURGEOIS, *Conductor*

### CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOMING REMARKS

THE HONORABLE WENDELL H. FORD  
*United States Senator, Kentucky*

### INVOCATION

THE REVEREND BILLY GRAHAM

### MUSICAL SELECTION

THE HARLAN BOYS CHOIR  
*Harlan, Kentucky*  
DAVID L. DAVIES, *Director*

THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL OATH OF OFFICE WILL BE  
ADMINISTERED TO JAMES DANFORTH QUAYLE BY  
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT  
OF THE UNITED STATES,  
THE HONORABLE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR.

### AN AMERICAN MEDLEY

STAFF SERGEANT ALVY R. POWELL  
*The United States Army Band*

THE PRESIDENTIAL OATH OF OFFICE WILL BE  
ADMINISTERED TO GEORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH  
BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
THE HONORABLE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST.

### INAUGURAL ADDRESS

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

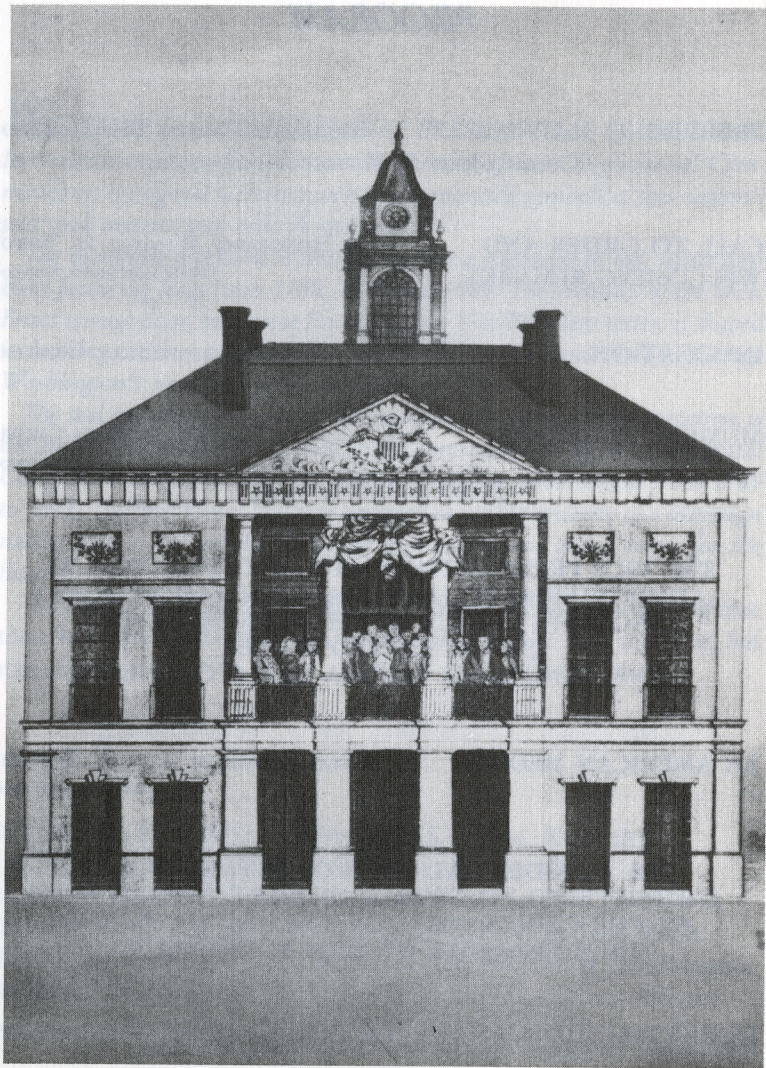
### BENEDICTION

THE REVEREND BILLY GRAHAM

### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

STAFF SERGEANT ALVY R. POWELL  
*The United States Army Band*





FEDERAL HALL

*George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on April 30, 1789, at Federal Hall in New York City. This engraving, made by Amos Doolittle after a drawing by Peter Lacour, is the only known contemporary rendering of the first presidential inauguration.*

## THE BICENTENNIAL INAUGURATION 1789-1989

Today this nation commemorates the two-hundredth anniversary of the first American presidential inauguration. On fifty previous occasions, held regularly every four years, Americans have joined together to witness their President take a simple thirty-five word oath of office. Although often inconvenienced by inclement weather, these inaugural ceremonies have never been postponed or suspended, regardless of war, depression or any other national crisis. This event celebrates the triumph of representative democracy through the peaceful transfer of political power according to the vote of the people.

Proceedings associated with presidential elections and inaugurations, almost routine after two centuries, were entirely new and untried following the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The Constitution was both specific and vague when dealing with the process for electing and inaugurating the nation's chief executive. It provided that the President be elected through an Electoral College, equal to the number of senators and representatives from each state. It authorized Congress to determine when elections should be held, when the Electoral College would meet, and when the new President would take the oath of office. The Constitution provided that the President be a natural born citizen of the United States, have lived in this country for at least fourteen years, and have attained the age of thirty-five. It even specified the oath of office that the new President should swear or affirm. Beyond that, the Constitution remained silent.

In September 1788, at a time when eleven of the thirteen states had ratified the Constitution, the outgoing Congress under the Articles of Confederation set the first Wednesday of the following January as the date for the selection of presidential electors. These electors would meet on the first Wednesday in February 1789 to choose a President. The new government would commence its business on the first Wednesday in March. Four states selected presidential electors by popular vote; three allowed their state legislatures to make the choice; two arranged for a combination of popular and legislative elections; and in one state the governor and legislature named the electors. Three states did not participate in the selection of the first President: New York, because



of a disagreement between the two houses of its legislature; and North Carolina and Rhode Island, because neither had yet ratified the Constitution.

When the Electoral College met, its members voted unanimously for George Washington as President. John Adams, receiving the second highest number of votes, was elected Vice President. Historians have called Washington perhaps the only indispensable person in American history. Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolution, Washington had resigned his commission to return to civilian life after the war, thereby renouncing any ambition to become military dictator or king. Later, Washington helped call the Annapolis Convention, which set in motion the effort to create a stronger federal government. He served as president of the Constitutional Convention, and was the universal choice to become the first President of the United States. Washington made no speeches nor did he conduct any other form of campaign for the office.

On March 4, 1789, the new Congress was scheduled to convene in Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York City. However, due to poor weather, bad roads, and the slowness of some states to elect members, only a third of the senators and a quarter of the representatives reached New York on the appointed day. Finally, by April 6, each house had established a quorum. Congress then counted the electoral ballots and dispatched a messenger to notify George Washington officially of his election. Washington, in his own words, "bade adieu to Mt. Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity," and set out for New York. He felt somewhat like "a culprit who is going to the place of his execution," a feeling dispelled by the enthusiastic, adoring crowds who cheered him along his route north from Virginia. Washington reached the New Jersey shore on April 22. Thirteen ship's pilots in white uniforms rowed him across the Hudson River on a barge specially built for the occasion. New Yorkers lined the docks in tumultuous welcome as he approached the shore.

Meanwhile, in Federal Hall, Congress worked to complete the details for this first inauguration. In the upper chamber, John Adams, who had taken the oath as Vice President nine days earlier, presided over the Senate. Among the first questions to arise was what to call the new chief executive. A Senate committee suggested this august title: "His Highness, the President of the United States of America and

Protector of the Rights of the Same." Anti-aristocratic members of the Senate and House hooted down this proposal and settled for a more straightforward, democratic-sounding address: "George Washington, President of the United States."

Before the inauguration began on April 30, 1789, at Federal Hall, the Senate debated how to receive members of the House into its chamber for the ceremony. Discussion focused particularly on who should stand and who should sit. Some senators observed that when Great Britain's Parliament received the king's annual message, members of the House of Lords sat, while members of the House of Commons stood. Other senators pointed out that this was simply because the House of Lords lacked enough seats for each member. In the midst of this inconclusive debate, members of the House of Representatives arrived and took their place across the room from the senators. The sound of drums and bagpipes and the cheering of the gathering crowd heralded the arrival of the presidential party. The President-elect entered the hall carrying a sword. He was dressed in deep brown, with metal buttons ordered specially for the occasion, and white stockings. He moved between the groups of assembled members and bowed to each. He was then escorted out onto a balcony overlooking Wall Street. Secretary of the Senate Samuel Otis held the Bible on which Washington took the oath of office. At the ceremony's completion the crowd below gave three cheers.

Washington went back inside the Senate chamber, where he read his brief inaugural address. Senator William Maclay of Pennsylvania noted that "this great Man was agitated and embarrassed more than ever he was by the levelled Cannon or pointed Musket. He trembled, and several times could scarce make out to read." In his address, Washington called upon "that Almighty Being who rules over the universe" to assist the American people in finding "liberties and happiness" under "a government instituted by themselves."

Among the skilled orators in the audience, Representative Fisher Ames of Massachusetts was impressed by the simple eloquence of Washington's remarks. They seemed to him "an allegory in which virtue was personified. . . . Her power over the heart was never greater." This first inaugural address was to be an auspicious beginning for an entirely new form of American national government.

Washington's second inauguration on March 4, 1793 took place in Philadelphia, as did the March 4, 1797 inauguration of John Adams.



The inauguration of Thomas Jefferson on March 4, 1801 was the first to be held in Washington. Jefferson took the oath of office in the old Senate chamber on the ground floor of the Capitol (today the restored old Supreme Court chamber).

Andrew Jackson's inaugural on March 4, 1829 was the first of thirty-five held on the East Front of the Capitol. Though Jackson's second inaugural in 1833 was moved indoors to the House chamber because of his ill health, the next elected Presidents from Martin Van Buren to Theodore Roosevelt were sworn into office on the East Front. Not until the 1909 inauguration of William Howard Taft did a raging blizzard force the ceremony back indoors to the Senate chamber.

Woodrow Wilson resumed use of the East Front for inaugural ceremonies on March 4, 1913. The East Front continued to be the site of presidential inaugurations until January 20, 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt's unprecedented fourth inaugural. With the nation and the President weary after four years of war, Roosevelt chose to have an austere, low-key ceremony on the south portico of the White House.

In 1949, Harry Truman's inauguration saw the return of the ceremonies to the Capitol's East Front steps, where they were held through the inauguration of Jimmy Carter in 1977.

The 1981 inauguration of Ronald Reagan was the first ever held on the West Front of the Capitol. President Reagan's second inaugural on January 21, 1985 also was scheduled for the West Front, but was forced indoors to the Capitol Rotunda due to bitterly cold weather. Thus, the 1989 inauguration will be only the second ever on the West Front of the Capitol.

Since 1789, the United States has held fifty quadrennial inaugurations, and nine additional oath-takings as Vice Presidents succeeded Presidents who died or resigned. After the 1933 ratification of the Constitution's Twentieth Amendment, the date of the inauguration changed from March 4 to January 20, ending the long interregnum that had existed between the presidential election and inauguration. Although inaugural traditions have changed through the years, the fundamental premise of and promise to the American people implicit in the ceremonies remain unchanged and unwavering. Thus the American presidential inaugurals, with their speeches and attendant festivities, represent both national renewal and continuity through the past two hundred years and into the future.