



HAIL TO THE CHIEF

Website celebrates presidential inaugurations past and present

On Friday, Jan. 20, we will inaugurate a new president. It will be the 58th time the presidential oath of office has been administered. Donald Trump will be the 45th man to take office in a peaceful transfer of power since George Washington was sworn in on April 30, 1789.

The recent election was a bitter, divisive contest that left a majority of Americans shocked and concerned. It was the second time in the last five elections that the winner of the popular vote did not receive the prize. The nearly 3 million more popular votes Hillary Clinton received over Mr. Trump is a record high for a candidate who won the popular vote but lost the Electoral College contest.

None of the drama or controversy of this election will be apparent on **Inaugural.Senate.gov**. This is the website of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. The committee is responsible for the planning and execution of the swearing-in ceremonies, and several related events, for the president and vice president. The site provides a lot of information on the pomp and circumstance of the day as well as the history of inaugurations. It doesn't dwell on the campaign preceding it.

Much of the site is devoted to celebrating inaugurations as prestigious events that symbolize our democratic ideals. Current and past committee members, comprised of leaders of the Senate and House of Representatives from both parties, are listed. Details of the inaugural luncheon are described, including speakers, gifts and menu. There's a section devoted to the construction of the platform on which the ceremony takes place, complete with

"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."

Presidential oath of office

Article II, Section 1,
U.S. Constitution



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InSites

photos of the committee proudly driving in the first nails.

The itinerary of the day is listed and described:

- Morning worship service**
- Procession to the Capitol**
- Vice president's swearing-in ceremony**
- President's swearing-in ceremony**
- Inaugural address**
- Departure of outgoing president**
- Inaugural luncheon**
- Inaugural parade**
- Inaugural balls**

The part of the site I found most interesting was the section on past inaugurations, particularly the inaugural addresses. Each incoming president's remarks offer a window into times past. They speak to the issues of the day, some much more eloquently than others. The same issues — freedom, equality, war and foreign entanglements, to name a few — confounded many presidents over the centuries.

The website is professionally done with a solid design and good typography, navigation and imagery. Too bad Congress doesn't work as well as its site.

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