

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S FIRST INAUGURAL — MISCELLANY

The inauguration of a President of the United States occurring but once in every four years makes the event an occasion of great significance. The inauguration of 1953 would seem to create a proper environment to review some of the incidents which took place during the first inauguration of Abraham Lincoln in 1861. *Lincoln Lore* through the years has touched upon many phases of the ceremonies including several monographs on the address itself. For this issue of the bulletin it would seem quite appropriate to collect from the daily press and other contemporary sources of that day a miscellany of unrelated episodes which have enough of the human interest element about them to warrant their reprinting.

Sleeping in the Capital

"Over twenty-thousand strangers were in the city, many of whom slept the night previous to inauguration day in the Capital and in the streets—it being absolutely impossible to find rooms or beds anywhere."

Mrs. Lincoln at Willard's Hotel

"Mrs. Lincoln, who is fast winning the hearts of all who call upon her, on account of her exceedingly pleasant and sociable nature, which is blended with a grace and dignity of nature seldom combined, bears the fatigue of her new position with becoming patience! Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Hamlin are attended by several of their personal friends."

Douglas Holds Lincoln's Hat

"A Cincinnati paper says that at the inauguration, Mr. Lincoln's hat being in danger, Mr. Douglas said 'permit me, sir,' and gallantly took the vexatious article and held it during the entire reading of the inaugural! He must have reflected pretty seriously during that half hour, that instead of delivering an inaugural address from that portico, he was holding the hat of the man who was doing it."

Three Photographers

"A small camera was directly in front of Mr. Lincoln, another at a distance of a hundred yards, and a third of huge dimensions on his right, raised on a platform built specially for the purpose."

Releasing the Address to the Press

"The inaugural will not be delivered to the press until Mr. Lincoln begins to read it, when, by his own direction, a copy prepared for that purpose will be delivered to the agent of the Associated Press for immediate transmission over the wires, and another copy will be submitted to the Washington papers."

Steel Bowed Spectacles

"Senator Baker of Oregon introduced Mr. Lincoln to the assembly. . . . He lays down his manuscript, clasps his hands in his pockets and pulls out a pair of steel bowed spectacles . . . a lusty hawk-eyed fellow cries out, 'Take off them spectacles, we want to see your eyes!'"

Lincoln's Delivery

"The inaugural was delivered in a clear and emphatic voice, which never faltered throughout, and reached nearly to the outskirts of the vast throng. It was frequently interrupted with applause but most vehemently at the point where he announced his inflexible purpose to execute the laws and discharge his whole constitutional duty."

But One Gesture

"Lincoln spoke with deep earnestness and fervor. His diction was forceful and strong and revealed to me the fact that he was a man of careful and deep research. . . . He had his manuscript before him but seemed to know his remarks by heart. He made only one gesture throughout his oration, the rest of the time his arms hanging loosely at his side. When he uttered the sentence, 'No state has the right to secede' he brought his clenched fist down with a resounding thump on the table."

Taney's Eighth Presidential Oath Administered

"The inauguration of today makes the eighth ceremony of the kind at which Judge Taney has officiated, having administered the oath of office successively to Presidents Van Buren, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan and Lincoln."

Lincoln Not Frightened

"Mr. Lincoln was asked whether he felt at all frightened while delivering his inaugural address, the threats of assassination having been so numerous. He replied that he had no such sensation, and that he had often experienced much greater fear in addressing a dozen Western men on the subject of temperance."

Kissing Little Girls

"On entering the White House he was conducted to the Blue room, when, after an introduction to the marshals, aids, and officials, the public were admitted. Thirty-two little girls, with wreaths about their heads, and bearing little blue flags, were introduced individually, and audibly kissed by the President. The hair of one catching in the President's waistcoat button, caused much merriment and some difficulty to disentangle."

Attending the Inaugural Ball

"President Lincoln entered, leaning upon the arms of Vice President Hamlin and Senator Anthony of Rhode Island. Immediately behind them, to the intense astonishment of all, came Mrs. Lincoln leaning on the arm of Senator Douglas, more popularly known as the Little Giant . . . with her came Miss Edwards, her niece, a lovely creature."

The Self-Possessed Mrs. Lincoln

"Mrs. Lincoln who followed in his (the President's) wake on the arm of the self-possessed Senator Douglas, is still more self-possessed, and has with more readiness adapted herself than her taller half, to the exalted station to which she has so strangely advanced, from the simple social life of the little inland Capital of Illinois. Women learn such things much faster than men. Mrs. Lincoln shows us, on her choice of blue on this occasion, as the color which fits her fair complexion best that she is no stranger to the beautiful science of the toilet."

The Belle of the Inaugural Ball

"At 12¼ o'clock the quadrille of the evening was danced—Douglas and Mrs. Lincoln, Hamlin and Miss Edwards, Mayor Berret and Mrs. Bergman, Mr. Harrard and Mrs. Baker composing the set. Miss Edwards, niece of Mrs. Lincoln, is acknowledged to be the belle of the evening. The ladies of the Presidential Party are dressed exquisitely, and in perfect taste."