

OFFICIAL INAUGURAL
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN—*Inaugurated March 4,
1861.*

Abraham Lincoln took office at a tense, dramatic moment in the nation's history. Washington was an armed camp. Loaded cannon were parked on all the streets leading to the Capitol. The windows of the Capitol itself were crowded with sharpshooters. The day was warm and sunny. The incoming and outgoing Presidents rode together to the Capitol, flanked by a double row of cavalymen on each side. Sharpshooters were stationed in all the windows along Pennsylvania Avenue. The aged Chief Justice Roger B. Taney administered the oath of office to President Lincoln. As the President drew the manuscript of his address from his pocket, he could find no place to put his tall stove-pipe hat. He looked about uneasily. His old political enemy, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, noting Lincoln's predicament, stepped forward and took his hat, holding it throughout the ceremony. The solemnity of the occasion was relieved by the ball held in Judiciary Square where 5,000 dancers were on hand. The Lincolns came in at 11 o'clock, Mrs. Lincoln on the arm of Senator Douglas. Her hair was puffed and frizzled; she was gowned in white silk. Some of the other ladies had powdered their hair with gold and diamond dust. When Lincoln delivered his Inaugural Address four future Presidents of the United States stood on the platform near him: Hayes, Garfield, Arthur and Benjamin Harrison.



On a sombre, dreary day, March 4, 1865, President Lincoln took the oath a second time. The Civil War was nearing its end, but the heart of the nation was heavy. A vast crowd listened as President Lincoln delivered his Second Inaugural Address, which was, and will ever be, one of the finest American state papers.

