

USING A CHRONOLOGY

Inaugurations to Remember

Presidential inaugurations have often marked turning points in the nation's history. They also have reflected the tone of the times. During the Civil War (1861-1865) and the Great Depression (1929-early

1940s), Presidents made stirring inaugural speeches that addressed those crises.

This chronology highlights some significant U.S. presidential inaugurations, past and present.

1793: George Washington's second inaugural address is the shortest ever: two paragraphs, 135 words.

1949: Harry S. Truman's inaugural ceremony is the first to be televised.

1829: Andrew Jackson is forced to flee when thousands of supporters mob the Executive Mansion to celebrate his first inauguration.

1961: John F. Kennedy encourages Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

1841: William Henry Harrison delivers the longest inaugural address ever, speaking for almost two hours in the rain without an overcoat. He dies of pneumonia a month later.

1973: Secret Service agents run alongside Richard M. Nixon's limousine, deflecting objects thrown at him by people protesting the Vietnam War.

1865: As the Civil War draws to a close, Abraham Lincoln urges the nation to reunite "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

1977: During his inaugural parade, Jimmy Carter walks in the bitter cold from the Capitol to the White House instead of traveling by limo.

1925: Calvin Coolidge's inauguration is the first to be broadcast on the radio.

2001: Protests mar the first inauguration of George W. Bush, whose disputed victory over Al Gore was resolved by a Supreme Court ruling.

1933: During the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt tells the nation that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

2009: Barack Obama is sworn in as the first African-American President in U.S. history.

DIRECTIONS: Study the chronology at left. Then use it—and your general knowledge of social studies—to answer the questions below.

- When did George Washington first become President?
- How many of the inaugurations covered took place during the 19th century?
- Which President served during the Great Depression?
- Which President's inauguration was the first to be televised?
- Which President in this chronology served the shortest term in office?
- What year did the Civil War end?
- Which President was the first whose voice was heard by Americans in their homes?
- Why do you suppose Jimmy Carter chose to walk during his inaugural parade?
- Who is called "the Father of our country"?
- Which of these inaugurations do you think is most noteworthy? Explain.

Research question (for extra credit): What was noteworthy about the inauguration that took place in January 1937?