

DACOR Bacon House and Inaugurals

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DACOR Bacon House and its occupants for more than a hundred and fifty years were involved – sometimes intimately – in the inauguration of presidents. In later days, they received special invitations, like Virginia Bacon, to inaugural balls.

Tench Ringgold, as marshal of the District of Columbia, planned the second inauguration of James Monroe in 1821, the inauguration of John Quincy Adams in 1825, and the first inauguration of Andrew Jackson in 1829. He was on the dais when the president took office, arranged for the security of the Capitol Building during the ritual, and was in charge of the security of the White House after the inauguration when thousands of people flocked to the grounds to congratulate the president. During Adam's presidency, he was responsible for making an inventory of public and private furniture, seeing that the private possessions of Adams were removed before Jackson moved in. It was Ringgold who presented the Bible to Andrew Jackson for his oath-taking during his first inauguration in 1829.



Andrew Jackson being sworn in as president by
Chief Justice John Marshall, March 1829.

William Thomas Carroll, Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States, provided Bibles for the inauguration of President James Buchanan in 1857 and Abraham Lincoln in 1861. Lincoln's family Bible had not yet arrived in Washington. It was the Carroll Bible, which is incidentally dedicated to Carroll's wife, Sally Sprigg Carroll, that Barack Obama was sworn in on in 2009 and 2013 and Donald Trump in 2017.



President Lincoln's inauguration March 2, 1861, using the Bible provided by William Carroll, Clerk of the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Melville Fuller, who lived in the house 1896-1910, swore in President McKinley in 1897, Theodore Roosevelt in 1901 and 1905.



Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library

Chief Justice Fuller (with flowing white hair) on left, swearing in President McKinley in 1897.

Eugene Brooks, the Black American who worked as a messenger for Chief Justice Fuller and saw him almost every day during Supreme Court terms, joined Black community committees to make sure that African Americans coming to Washington for inaugurations and facing Jim Crow

laws found decent housing and were received with a welcoming embrace. He was also on the organizing committee for the inaugural balls attended by local and visiting Black Americans. Ironically, his boss, Chief Justice Fuller, ruled in favor of Plessy vs Ferguson, which legalized Jim Crow laws throughout the country.



Chief Justice Fuller swearing in Teddy Roosevelt in second inauguration 1905

Chief Justice Edward Douglass White, the grandson of Tench Ringgold, swore in President Woodrow Wilson twice in 1813 and 1917, and Warren Harding in 1921.



Woodrow Wilson being sworn in as president in 1917 by Chief Justice Edward Douglass White

Virginia Murray Bacon, the last owner of the house, was an inaugural ceremony and inaugural ball A-lister from the year she landed in Washington to the end of her life. She attended the inauguration of Coolidge in 1925 and of every president until Carter. She was especially admiring of President Eisenhower, and she attended his inauguration in 1953 along with her daughter Martha, two grandchildren, and her brother, Henry A. Murray, the Harvard professor, and his wife.