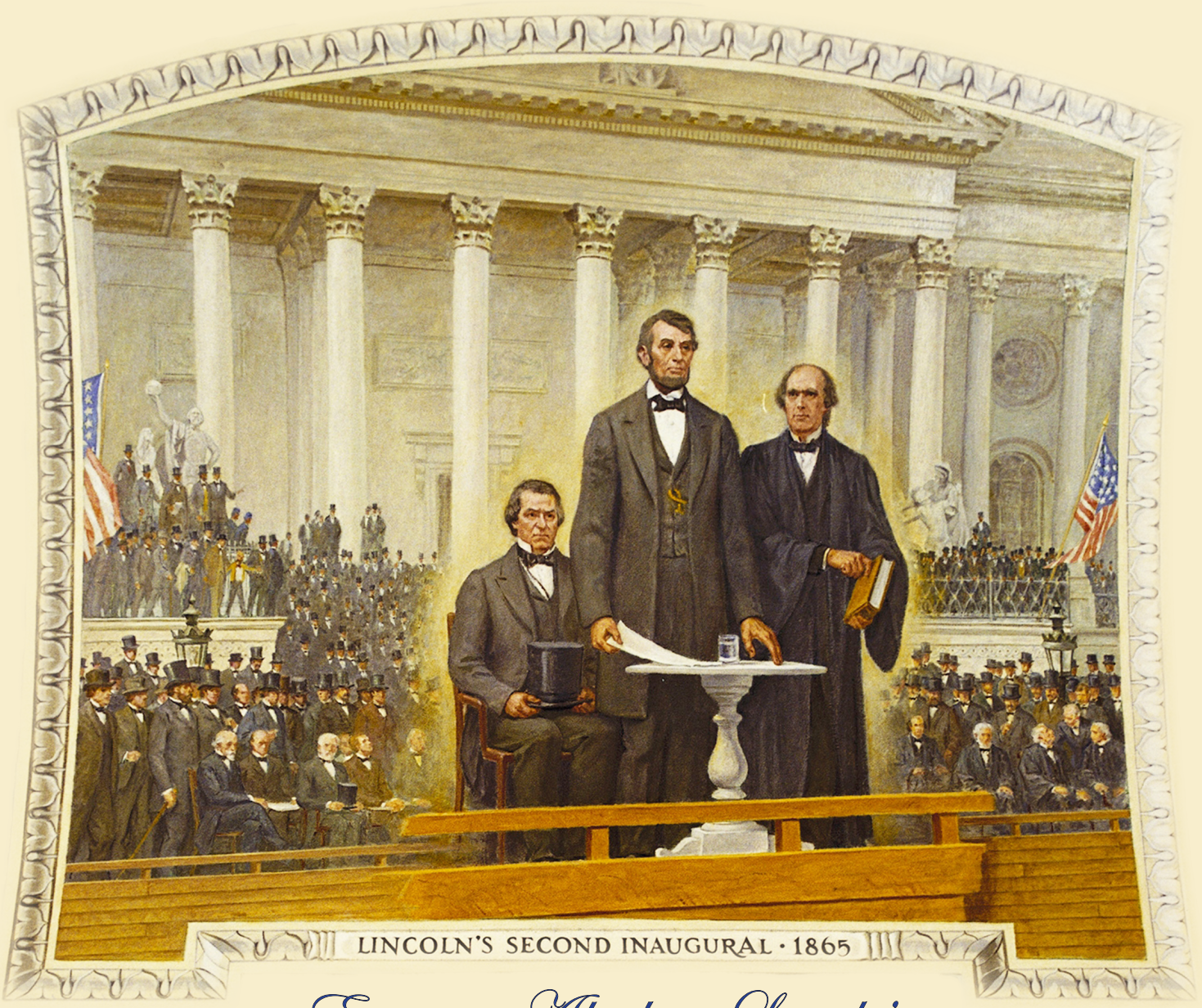
Special Edition

THE CAPITOL DOME



Examing Abraham Lincoln's
SECOND INAUGURAL AT THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL

A MAGAZINE OF HISTORY PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY ★ VOLUME 52 , NUMBER 1 ★ SPRING 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

JANE ARMSTRONG HUDIBURG, who has written articles in this and previous issues of *The Capitol Dome*, was recognized on the floor of the Maryland State Senate earlier this year. Senate President Mike Miller called Hudiburg to the floor during a session and discussed the article she wrote about the burning of Washington in the Fall 2014 issue, "'Doubt, Confusion, and Dismay': Efforts to Save the House and Senate Records in 1814." The article features Patrick Magruder, who had been a member of the Maryland legislature as well as the House of Representatives, which may have drawn Miller's particular attention. Miller complimented both Hudiburg and *The Capitol Dome*.

To read Hudiburg's newest article, turn to page 20 of this issue of *The Capitol Dome*.

The Capitol Dome is a quarterly publication of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society,
200 Maryland, Ave., NE,
Washington, DC 20002
P: (202) 543-8919 F: (202) 544-8244
Catalog Orders: (800) 887-9318
email: uschs@uschs.org
on the web: *www.uschs.org*

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Editor: Lauren Borchard
Designer: Diana E. Wailes
Printer: HBP, Inc.
All uncredited photos are courtesy of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society.

UNITED STATES CAPITOL
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Contents

Cover: *Allyn Cox's "Lincoln's Second Inaugural" is part of the Great Experiment Hall in the Cox Corridors on the House side of the Capitol. The main figures include (from left to right) Vice President Andrew Johnson, President Abraham Lincoln, and Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase.*

A CURIOUS REMOVAL:

LETA MYERS SMART, *THE RESCUE*, AND *THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA*

C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 1. Pediment of the Central Portico of the United States Capitol.

In 1958, the statue groups that stood on the cheek-blocks of the Capitol's East Front were curiously removed. For over a hundred years, Luigi Persico's *The Discovery of America* and Horatio Greenough's *The Rescue* bookended the staircase, greeting congressmen and visitors as they entered and left the building and serving as fixtures at every presidential inauguration. Leta Myers Smart, a member of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, led the removal campaign from her position as "Assistant to the Sachem" of the California Indian Rights Association based out of Los Angeles. She wrote dozens of letters to legislators, art critics, and architects throughout the 1950s; she was tenacious, perceptive, and really witty. In one letter, for example, to the long-serving Architect of the Capitol, David Lynn, she threatened, "to take a stick of dynamite (no, two sticks!), and blow up the 'Rescue Group' (laugh)," but then, feigning fear that she might have just incriminated herself, suggested that perhaps she'd just "have to get the communists to do the job!" She continued, "Seriously now, Mr. Lynn, I have been as busy as one could be when they [are as] indisposed with arthritis as I have been for several weeks,—writing and talking whenever I get the chance about those hideous statues that are a disgrace to the Indian race, shameful things that never should have been put up in the first place!"[1] At other points she referred to the

statues as "unflattering and unjust" and "a great source of humiliation to every Indian who has set foot in Washington."[2] Throughout her campaign she maintained that the images portrayed in the monuments were not only violent in content, but that their continued existence on the stairs of the Capitol re-enacted the violence of conquest and United States settlement on a daily basis.

In telling this story, I want to assert that Smart's campaign reflects in some significant ways its 1950s Cold War context and connects with other examples of twentieth-century Native activism, especially in the period between the creation of the National Congress of American Indians (1944) and the American Indian Movement (1960s-1970s). Most people today think of Washington as a tourist destination—a place to "experience" history. "Engage. Excite. Entertain." exclaims the D.C. convention bureau website. But it was not always this way, nor was Washington always a seat of global power. It was a local place first—it became national; it became global. Native experiences with the city shaped that process of becoming and Leta Myers Smart's episode provides us with a window in.

Discovery and *Rescue*

Examining the art within and surrounding the U.S. Capitol highlights how central the portrayals and suggestions of Indigenous violence were to the commemorative landscape in Washington. In addition to the statues on the East Front, the works inside the Rotunda—sandstone reliefs of Pilgrims, Pocahontas, William Penn, and Daniel Boone, as well as the large historic paintings depicting Pilgrims (again), Pocahontas (again), Hernando De Soto, and Christopher Columbus—all contribute to a larger narrative of conquest and defeat. The art and architecture of congressional hall was created in conjunction with and designed specifically to justify and legitimate America's sense of Manifest Destiny. In her book, Art and Empire, art historian Vivien Green Fryd asserted that "the sculpture and painting in the U.S. Capitol . . . outlines the course of North American empire by promoting and legitimizing the subjugation of the Native Americans."[3] These pieces, she suggested, "present situations from the past that seem to condone the policies being contemporaneously formulated by Congress and the presidents," namely the removal and reservation policies of the early-to-mid-nineteenth century.[4]

Luigi Persico, who was born in Naples and immigrated to the United States in 1818, sculpted *The Discovery of America* out of Seravezza marble between 1840 and 1844. James Buchanan, a close friend of Persico's, said that the piece represented "the great discoverer when he first bounded with ecstasy upon the shore, all his toils and perils past, presenting a hemisphere to the astonished world, with the name America inscribed on it."[5]

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 2. Lifting north section of Rescue *from upper north cheek block.*

The massive frame, frontal position, and rigid pose of Columbus is contrasted with the crouching and hesitant Indigenous woman. Her twisted pose, with uneven and broken contours, differs significantly from his solid, massive form.[6] Of course, it's worth noting that Senator Charles Sumner, a consistent critic of Capitol art, demanded, "What is Columbus going to do, play a game of nine pins?"[7] A report filed by the Washington Art Union Association criticized the group as well, but it focused on the Native woman whose "crouching position . . . destroys the effect of the whole, and suggests a subject for ridicule rather than admiration."[8]

Horatio Greenough, whose much-maligned sculpture of George Washington was placed in the Capitol Rotunda in 1841 (but later moved to the east lawn; it now resides in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History), was commissioned to create the group opposite *The Discovery*. He also chose Seravezza marble, in consultation with Persico, and his group *The Rescue* took its position in 1853. Secretary of State John Forsyth said, "I know of no single fact in profane history that can balance the one so wisely chosen by Mr. Persico as the subject of [Greenough's] group . . . which shall commemorate the dangers and difficulty of peopling our continent" (ignoring, of course, the fact that the continent had already been "peopled").[9] The Native woman in Persico's image has been replaced with a muscular Indian man who struggled against a

Fig. 3. Crating Rescue *on upper north cheek block.*

hulking settler's restrictive arm-hold. This piece does not suggest assimilation, but rather subjugation.[10] The same report that ridiculed Persico's statue suggested that while Greenough "evidently intended to do something bold and strong . . . the very exaggeration of the design renders it weak and meaningless, while the execution is only commonplace."[11] Interestingly, among the initial critiques, those most vocally antagonistic to *The Rescue* focused on the dog (its placement, its demeanor, its attitude, its facial expression, and the accuracy of its imagined breed). Little was said about the more dramatic and violent components of the group.

Despite the original poor reviews, however, both statue groups found general acceptance and even admiration on the East Front stairs. In fact, in an issue of *The Crayon*, a nineteenth-century magazine devoted to art criticism, W. J. Stone noted that *The Rescue* was "refined, chaste, and beautiful" and he also displayed an uncommon self-awareness about portrayals of the violence of conquest in the art that had filled and surrounded the Capitol over the past two decades. "Although their lands were necessary to us, [we should not] hand down to posterity . . . our deeds of oppression towards the Aborigines . . . by having it sculptured in stone on the very walls of the Rotunda," he wrote. Then, after recounting a story in which an anonymous Indian man strolled through the rotunda, openly criticizing and challenging the narrative told in the reliefs—that Native people were killed after giving food and land to settlers—he concluded that "this little incident has been mentioned to show how far superior Greenough's design is [for *The Rescue*]; it can never be so severely criticized by our Aborigines."[12] Perhaps he spoke too soon.

The Removal Campaign

It's not entirely clear when Leta Myers Smart first trained her eyes and her formidable pen on the Capitol statue groups; the earliest letter available was written in 1952. Prior to that point, Smart had lived a compelling and politically engaged life. One of seven siblings, she was born in Nebraska to John and Barbara Myers in approximately 1894 (the 1920 census lists her birthdate as 1898, while both the 1930 and 1940 censuses list 1894).[13] She attended Hampton Institute in Virginia, a historically African American school that also focused on providing educational opportunities for Native American youth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[14]

In 1915, Smart began teaching at the Zuni Boarding School in New Mexico. It was perhaps there that she became frustrated with the Office of Indian Affairs, as so many other Native boarding school employees did. She took particular issue with its efforts to forcefully assimilate Native children and the ways in which she felt the office was mismanaged. Not long after,

she began writing poetry that criticized the OIA. In 1930, she lived in Los Angeles, but by the middle of the decade she had moved across the country to Washington, DC.[15] After a short stay there, she moved back to California and became active in several Native political organizations, including serving as one of the founding members of the Los Angeles branch of the National Congress of American Indians.[16]

Smart outlined her critiques of the Capitol statue groups most clearly in a letter to the National Sculpture Society in 1953 and expanded on these ideas in an open letter entitled "The Last Rescue," published in *Harper's* in 1959. To the National Sculpture Society she wrote, "The American Indian is no longer,—if he ever was, the blood-thirsty savage Greenough made him out to be in this group of sculpture . . . we feel we ought to rescue the Indians from these deplorable straits."[17] In *Harper's* she asserted that the "whole thing gives a very unflattering and unjust impression of the American Indian, who was better known for his acts of kindness to the early settlers than for his savagery." Across the staircase she noted "the unfortunate Indian woman . . . stands there looking up at Columbus in awe or wonderment, or possibly worry." She concluded, after looking "at the statue from the rear," that "it must be worry; she was about to lose what little clothing she wore!"[18] Her criticisms focused on the violence portrayed and implied by the statues—physical violence, sexual violence, the violence of historical abstraction, of conquest, and of continued settler colonialism.

Smart also circulated and submitted petitions to Congress, as only a legislative act could remove the sculptures. In the petition she tempered her language, writing that the statues were intended from the outset only to serve as "period pieces," but their prominent position on the Capitol stairs was "misleading to the general public in that they fail to portray the true character of the American Indian." The petition suggested that the statues be moved to a museum where they could be preserved and protected from climate changes and precipitation, which had taken its toll on the soft Seravezza marble, and that a commission be established to conduct a contest for new designs with the winners to be sculpted and placed on the cheek blocks.[19]

There were a few earlier attempts to move or remove the statue groups. In 1850 the congressional Joint Committee on the Library—the committee responsible for decisions related to the art and architecture of the Capitol complex—discussed moving *The Discovery* away from the stairs to "a suitable place in some one of the public squares," but the reasoning behind their discussion is not clear. It might have been because Greenough's corresponding statue group was delayed (it wouldn't be placed until 1853). In 1939, Clark Burdick, a congressman from Rhode Island, introduced a joint resolution to the House

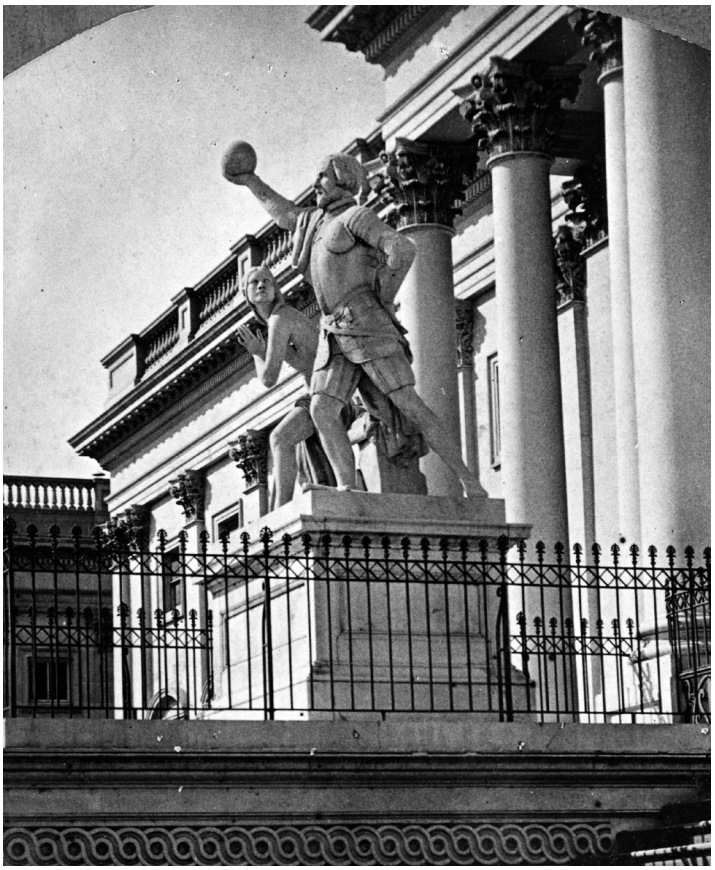
ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 4. The Discovery *on upper south cheek block.*


ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 5. View showing Discovery *group being safely removed from the upper south cheek block of the central steps on Nov. 25, 1958.*

to have "'*The Rescue*'. . . removed, ground into dust, and scattered to the four winds, that no more remembrance may be perpetuated of our barbaric past," referencing the violent actions of conquest perpetrated by settlers, not the portrayal of potential violence against the settler family imagined in the statue. The monument, his resolution stated, was "a constant reminder of ill-will toward the American Indian."[20] In 1941, Rep. James O'Connor from Montana, who also chaired the Committee on Indian Affairs, echoed Burdick's sentiments in his own resolution. He used more pointed language, though, asserting that *The Rescue* "misrepresented and grossly maligned" Native people and that the "group is an atrocious distortion of the facts of American history and a gratuitous insult." He concluded his removal appeal, arguing that it "perpetuates a slander . . . tends to promote disunity, and falsifies American history."[21] Both resolutions died in committee without coming up for a vote.

As early as 1945 the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) began protesting against the statue groups. As they fought against congressional efforts to pass termination legislation—a set of policies designed to end federal recognition of Native sovereignty, to sever the trust relationship between the United States and Indigenous nations, and place tribal individuals under the jurisdiction of state law—NCAI became increasingly frustrated that terminationist congressmen passed by these statues as they entered and left the building, providing them with a convenient visual reference point for the kinds of historical narratives they created in their legislative arguments. Historian Paul Rosier noted, "the image [*The Rescue*] and its title also argued that white Americans' enlightened intervention rescued Indians from themselves." Terminationists in Congress asserted that "Native Americans needed whites to rescue them from the primitive and un-American conditions of reservation life, in this case through legislation and relocation."[22]

Several organizations and individuals backed Smart's campaign in the 1950s. The National Congress of American Indians, the California Indian Rights Association, the Southern California Office of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, as well as members of the Oklahoma State Supreme Court all wrote letters and passed resolutions in support. For example, writing for the Friends Committee to the architect of the Capitol in 1959, Alice Shoemaker noted that the statues were "a constant source of antagonistic emotion to Indian people visiting Washington and to those at home." Using rhetoric similar to Smart's she asserted, "we add insult to injury when we place at our Capital [sic] for visitors from all over the world to see statuary which shows Indians as savages." She concluded, "we urge you to destroy these figures."[23]

Although there were several other factors that also contributed to their removal, Smart's efforts played the decisive role. In a letter to George Stewart, who had replaced David Lynn as architect of the Capitol, on the subject of what should happen to the statues, Republican congressman from Michigan August Johansen wrote in 1959 that "maybe this is a good time to make peace with the Indians."[24] *Discovery and Rescue* were taken off the cheek-blocks and are currently in storage. In 1994, the president of Salisbury State University on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Thomas Belevance, inquired about loaning the Rescue to place on his campus. In his response, Architect George White, who had taken over after Stewart's death, outlined a fuller story of the statue's removal. The sculptures were "in extremely poor condition," he noted, they were "badly deteriorated by weathering when removed from the east front of the Capitol in 1958." He lamented that "the removal and subsequent moves have left the marble in many fragments" and that the cost of restoration "would undoubtedly be considerable." White concluded importantly, "the subject of the sculpture was long considered controversial because of its negative portrayal of the Native American. Because of these considerations, the group has remained in storage."[25] Of all the pieces in the two statues, the dog has fared the best; it is currently on loan to the Middlebury College Museum of Art.

Not all of Smart's opponents felt as benignly capitulatory as Congressman Johansen, however. A 1960 issue of *Roll Call*, the Capitol Hill newspaper, referred to the removal of the statues as a "massacre" and the reporter, Jack Anderson, took the opportunity to editorialize. He wrote, "Today's Indians have pretty well adopted the habits and acoutrements [sic] of the white man, including a powerful lobby which brings much wampum from the Great White Father for loss of real or imaginary rights each year. Scalping has been reduced to perhaps peddling a few tickets to the Cotton Bowl at outrageous prices."[26] Interestingly, though, Smart faced very little direct opposition herself and seemingly avoided much of the racialized language and symbolism used against other Native activists across the twentieth century. In fact, the only insult publicly directed at Smart seems to be a moment when Capitol Architect Stewart referred to her in a public presentation as the "irate Indian woman."[27]

While there are many different ways to interpret Smart's campaign, it makes sense to situate it within the context of Native activism during the Cold War. In her foundational study, *Cold War Civil Rights*, Mary Dudziak argued persuasively that during the Cold War, as America attempted to manage its international image, the boundaries between foreign and domestic affairs blurred. The Cold War therefore had a positive effect on African American civil rights in that American policy-makers had to take the arguments of black activists seriously and make changes toward racial justice to represent the nation's image abroad. Recently several scholars have pointed to the "pervasive internationalism" in the work of postwar Native activists who drew inspiration from global decolonization

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Fig. 6. The female figure from the Discovery *statuary group rides safely to the ground. Nov. 25, 1958.*

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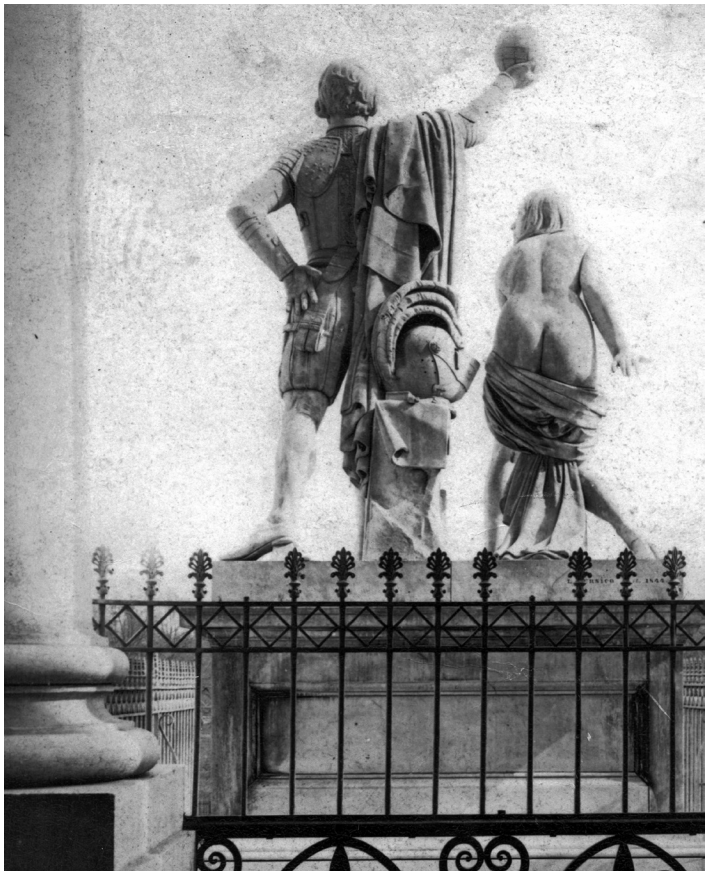

Fig. 7. Rear view of the Discovery.

movements and Cold War politics as well.[28] Dan Cobb, for example, demonstrated how D'Arcy McNickle and others "interwove the languages of international and Native politics to promote tribal sovereignty." He also highlighted the ways that NCAI and the Association on American Indian Affairs framed the fight against termination as a policy imperative necessary for "winning the cold war.[30] Historian Paul Rosier, in his book Serving Their Country, mentioned Smart's campaign briefly. He noted that she "shrewdly framed the issue in international terms" and that her voice represented all Native people who objected to the imagined violence of the statues, especially in light of threats that termination posed to Native sovereignty.[31]

As I noted at the beginning of this essay, she joked about getting communists to blow up The Rescue but more seriously asserted that the monuments "are bad propaganda for America and would make excellent fodder for our enemies."[32] In one letter she wrote that removing the pieces would be "in better keeping for the right kind of propaganda for Americanism."[33] And in another she argued that replacing the statues would demonstrate that the United States deserved to be "in that enviable position of being a good example to the rest of the world." [34] In yet another, she stated that *Rescue and Discovery* were "not only a disgrace to the Indians . . . but something that is not good for our country,—something that could be made much of and in the wrong way by our enemiesif they were wont to make something of them."[35] By framing her critiques in terms of the international politics of the Cold War and by using patriotic rhetoric, Smart infused her campaign with a certain amount of urgency that no doubt contributed to its success, but she is also part of a much deeper local history in Washington, DC, one that centers around Native visitors and residents carving out their own spaces within the place of the capital.

Indigenous people have always existed in the place now known as Washington, DC and Leta Myers Smart was one among many generations of Native activists marking the landscape of the federal city, although in her case, she was marking through erasure. The commemorative portrayals that popu lated the Capitol in the nineteenth century were not only significant as a symbolic justification for policies of empire, but came to represent an emerging cultural mythology along the physical landscape of the national imagination. Here, Euro-American men claimed ownership of the city (and nation) and decorated it with the violent images of conquest. Yet, as Smart's story demonstrated, they were never successful in commanding the city (or nation) in a way that precluded the claims of others.

DR. C. JOSEPH GENETIN-PILAWA is a history professor at George Mason University. He received his Ph.D. from Michigan State University and taught at Illinois College before going to George Mason. He is a member of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA), and has received fellowships from the Smithsonian Institution and the Kluge Center of the Library of Congress.

In 2011, Genetin-Pilawa received a Capitol Fellowship that yielded much of the research for this article, including finding many of Leta Myers Smart's letters in the Architect of the Capitol's archive. Genetin-Pilawa notes, "Being a USCHS [Capitol] Fellow was a great opportunity! The research I did at the Architect of the Capitol's archive has informed my project greatly. Also, I was able to use my time to explore other archival collections in the capital and write successful fellowship applications for work at the Smithsonian and Library of Congress."

Genetin-Pilawa's publications include: *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012); *Beyond "Two Worlds": Critical Conversations on Language and Power in Native North America*, Tribal Worlds series, co-edited with James Buss (State University of New York Press, 2014); "Ely Parker and the Paradox of Reconstruction Politics in Indian Country," *The World the Civil War Made* (University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming 2015); "Ely Parker and the Contentious Peace Policy," *Western Historical Quarterly* (Summer 2010); "Ely S. Parker," *in Milestone Documents of American Leaders: Exploring the Primary Sources of Notable Americans*, edited by Paul Finkelman (Salem Press, 2009); "'[A]ll intent on seeing the white woman married to the red man': The Parker/Sackett Affair and the Public Spectacle of Intermarriage," *Journal of Women's History* (June 2008); and "The Politics of Assimilation in the Great Lakes, 1880-1910," Northwest Ohio Quarterly (Spring 2001).

For more information on the Capitol Fellowship program, please visit ***www.uschs.org***. Applications for 2016 Fellowships must be postmarked by March 15, 2016. Be on the lookout for other Capitol Fellows, who may speak at USCHS lectures or whose work may appear in these pages.

Notes

1. Leta Myers Smart to David Lynn, Architect of the Capitol, Nov. 1, 1953, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group, Subfolder: Indian Protests, Curator's Office, Architect of the Capitol, Washington, D.C. (hereafter AOC).

2. Leta Myers Smart, "The Last Rescue," *Harper's* 219 (October 1959):92; Leta Myers Smart to David Lynn, Architect of the Capitol, Nov. 3, 1952, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group, Subfolder: Indian Protests, AOC.

3. Vivien Green Fryd, *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the United States Capitol, 1815-1860* (1992; reprint ed., Athens, OH, 2001), p. 3.

4. Ibid., p. 40. There is a significant literature on the art and architecture of Washington D.C., much of it focusing on the Capitol itself; however, Fryd's book is the only study that focuses specifically on Indian imagery. See also Charles E. Fairman, *Art and Artists of the Capitol of the United States of America* (Washington, DC,1927); Ellwood Parry, *The Images of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art*, 1590-1900 (New York, 1974); Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics*, 1825-1875 (Ithaca, NY, 1993); Donald Kennon, ed., *The United States Capitol: Designing and Decorating a National Icon* (Athens, OH, 2000); William Dickinson, Dean Herrin, and Donald Kennon, eds., *Montgomery C. Meigs and the Building of the Nation's Capital* (Athen, OH, 2001); Donald Kennon and Thomas Somma, eds., *American Pantheon: Sculptural and Artistic Decoration of the United States Capitol* (Athens, OH, 2004); Cynthia Field, Isabelle Gournay, and Thomas Somma, eds., *Paris on the Potomac: The French Influence on the Architecture and Art of Washington, D.C.* (Athens, OH, 2007).

5. *Register of Debates*, Senate, 24th Cong., 1st sess., Apr. 28, 1836, p. 1316.

6. Fryd, *Art and Empire*, pp. 91-94.

7. Handwritten note attributing the quote to *"The Story of the Capitol"* by Feeley (Congressional Record 1844)," File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Discovery Group–Description, AOC.

8. F.C. Adams, "Art in the District of Columbia," Report to the Commissioner of Education, Feb. 11, 1858, Washington Art Union Association, Vol. H, No. 9, p. 759.

9. Greenough to Forsyth, July 1, 1837, *Letters*, ed. Wright, 214.

10. Fryd, *Art and Empire*, p. 94.

11. F.C. Adams, "Art in the District of Columbia," p. 759.

12. W.J. Stone, "*Sketchings*," The Crayon, Dec. 19, 1855, p. 393.

13. Ancestry.com, 1920 *United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations Inc.,

2010), accessed June 20, 2013; Ancestry.com, 1930 *United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2010), accessed June 20, 2013; Ancestry.com, 1940 *United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2010), accessed June 20, 2013. Additionally, there is some confusion about her place of birth. The censuses list Nebraska, but in his *Changing Is Not Vanishing*, Robert Parker notes that she was born in Missouri.

14. Robert Parker, *Changing Is Not Vanishing: A Collection of Early American Indian Poetry to 1930* (Philadelphia, 2011), p. 305. See also, Daniel Littlefield Jr and James Parins, A Biobibliography of Native American Writers, 1774-1924 (Berkeley, 1980), p. 294.

15. For more on the urban Indian community in twentieth-century Los Angeles, see Nicolas Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill, 2012).

16. Ancestry.com, *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2010), accessed June 20, 2013; Ancestry.com, 1940 *United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, Ut.: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2010); Parker, *Changing Is Not Vanishing, p. 305.*

17. Smart to Joseph Morris, Managing Editor, The National Sculpture Society, Sept. 9, 1953, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

18. Smart, *"The Last Rescue,"* p. 92.

19. Petition, December 1953, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

20. House, 76th Cong., 1st sess., Apr. 26, 1939, House Joint Resolution 276.

21. House, 77th Cong., 1st sess., Apr. 14, 1941, House Rpt. 176.

22. Paul Rosier, *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), pp. 167-68.

23. Alice Shoemaker to the Architect of the Capitol, Nov. 5, 1959, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

24. Johansen to Stewart, Oct. 5, 1959, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

25. White to Sarbanes, July 21, 1994, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–General, AOC.

26. Jack Anderson, "The Vanishing Indian," *Roll Call*, Mar. 9, 1960, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

27. "Indians Fired Up By Chilly Statue," untitled newspaper, no date, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

28. Andrew Denson, "Native Americans in Cold War Public Diplomacy: Indian Politics, American History, and the U.S. Information Agency," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 36 (2012): 3-21, 5.

29. Daniel Cobb, Native Activism in Cold War America: *The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence, KS, 2008), pp. 8-9.

30. Ibid., p. 18.

31. Rosier, *Serving Their Country*, pp. 168-70.

32. Smart to Joseph Morris, Managing Editor, The National Sculpture Society, Sept. 9, 1953, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

33. Leta Myers Smart to David Lynn, Architect of the Capitol, Nov. 3, 1952, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group, Subfolder: Indian Protests, AOC.

34. Smart to Joseph Morris, Managing Editor, The National Sculpture Society, Sept. 9, 1953, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

35. Smart to J. George Stewart, Architect of the Capitol, Jan. 24, 1955, File: 19/2 STATUES: CAPITOL & GROUNDS, Folder: Rescue Group–Indian Protests, AOC.

"A SACRED EFFORT":
ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL AT THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL[1]

DONALD R. KENNON

ANTHONY LEONE, PASFIELD HOUSE INN

Fig. 1. Harper's Weekly *depicted the massive crowd at Lincoln's second inaugural in this engraving (later hand-tinted) published in the March 18, 1865 issue.*

Frederick Douglass knew he had to see President Abraham Lincoln. Even two policemen who denied him entrance to the White House couldn't stop him. The preeminent African American abolitionist and journalist was certain the President hadn't issued any orders to bar blacks from attending the White House reception on inauguration day in 1865. Douglass asked another guest to tell Lincoln that he had been detained at the door. Less than a minute later Douglass was admitted and Lincoln greeted him as "my friend Douglass." The President said he had observed Douglass in the crowd at the Capitol listening to his inaugural address. "There is no man's opinion that I value more than yours: what do you think of it." Douglass demurred, though he probably had come to tell Lincoln exactly what he thought. Lincoln pressed the question a second time, and Douglass responded, "Mr. Lincoln, that was a sacred effort."[2]

Presidential inaugurations always have some theological components, to the consternation of some who would prefer a

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Fig. 2. The crowd of onlookers arriving on a rainy morning for the inaugural ceremony on the Capitol's east front were captured in this photograph. A row of boarding houses can be seen in the background.

total separation of church and state. Since George Washington's first inaugural in 1789 almost all presidential oaths of office have been sworn on a Bible. Prayers are a frequent part of the program, and since the late nineteenth-century, almost all Presidents have added the phrase "so help me God" to the end of the oath of office prescribed by the Constitution. Lincoln took the oath on a Bible and may have said "so help me God" (more about that later), but what impressed Douglass more than anything was the deep theological grounding of the inaugural address that ennobled the occasion.

The context and setting of Lincoln's second inaugural (fig. 1) differed greatly from those of his first four years earlier. In March 1861, uncertainty and apprehension reigned. Seven southern states had seceded following Lincoln's election the previous November. The provisional government of the Confederate States of America had been formed in February with Jefferson Davis as provisional president. The rebellion was well underway but the War of the Rebellion had not yet begun. All eyes and ears were on what the untested prairie lawyer from Illinois would say and do as President of a nation divided. His pleas for unity and reconciliation fell on deaf ears and four long, bloody years of war ensued. The Capitol itself was unfinished in 1861, construction of the new cast-iron Dome still years from completion. Some must have wondered if the Union, like the unfinished Capitol, would ever be whole again.

PROLOGUE: A TALE OF TWO INAUGURALS

To the as many as forty thousand onlookers gathered at the Capitol on Saturday, March 4, 1865, the contrast with Lincoln's first inaugural must have been self-evident. The Capitol itself was different. The dome was complete, crowned by the Statue of Freedom erected in 1863. The Dome's completion during the Civil War was, as President Lincoln reportedly told

a visitor, "a sign that the Union would go on."[3] Moreover, the statue's symbolism (the sculptor had referred to it as "Armed Liberty") was apt for a war that had become a crusade to end slavery. The soaring Dome provided a fitting backdrop for an inaugural ceremony that many thought would be a celebration of the Union's divinely ordained victory. The war was all but over. Lee would surrender on April 9 and the surrender of all other Confederate forces would soon follow. Some in the crowd who expected a celebration of victory and a call for punishment of the rebels would be disappointed. Others would be inspired by what historians have called "the greatest of [Lincoln's] oratorical masterpieces."[4]

The differences between 1861 and 1865 were obvious to reporters of the *New York Herald* and the Washington, D.C. *Evening Star*, who both noted the marked difference in the tone of the two events. "Four years ago," the *Evening Star* observed, "the preparations were of a far more warlike character." The *Herald* reported: "On the former occasion the President elect was escorted to the Capitol surrounded by double lines of cavalry, armed to the teeth, with artillery to the front and rear, and infantry in line. . . . This formidable military array . . . was to suppress a threatened outbreak by malcontents who had entered into an alleged conspiracy to prevent by force, if necessary, the inauguration of President Lincoln." In 1865, however, "there was danger nowhere." The inaugural procession to the Capitol was "surrounded by a cordon of enthusiastic people." Soldiers were present, but "not there to put down treachery." Artillery thundered, not as a warning but as an honorary salute. In short, the *Herald* reporter concluded, "the whole affair demonstrated what the people of the United States can accomplish if the administrators of their government be true to their oaths, firm in the performance of their duty; and self-sacrificing in the exercise of a pure and lofty spirit of patriotism."[5]

The upbeat tone of inaugural day 1865 no doubt owed something to the confident belief that victory and an end to the war were close at hand. It also may have been due in part to security precautions that had been taken prior to March 4. Rumors that "something was up" in the days prior to the inauguration had raised security concerns. Military patrols had been doubled, roads and bridges leading to D.C. had been picketed, and both the military and the police were on the lookout for "suspicious persons." Detectives from New York and Philadelphia accompanied trains headed to the capital, following known or suspected pickpockets and "roughs."[6]

The inaugural proceedings at the Capitol (fig. 2) began with the procession of the presidential party from the White House to the Capitol. Prior to 1889 the procession was an elaborate affair more like the inaugural parades after the Capitol ceremony that are now the custom. The procession in 1865 included a large detachment of Metropolitan Police, Union cavalry, artillery, U.S. marshals and ceremonial marshals chosen for the occasion, Washington, D.C. and visiting Baltimore officials,

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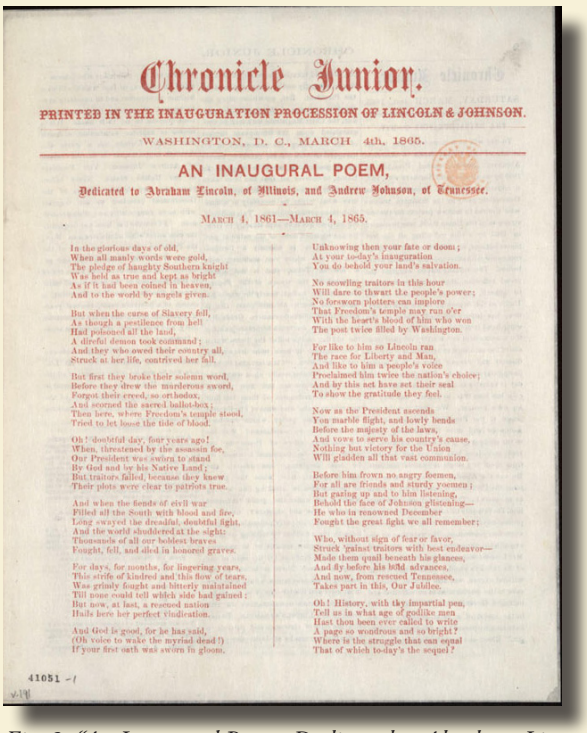

Chronicle Junior.

PRINTED IN THE INAUGURATION PROCESSION OF LINCOLN & JOHNSON.

WASHINGTON, D. C., MARCH 4th, 1865.

AN INAUGURAL POEM,

Dedicated to Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, and Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee.

MARCH 4, 1861—MARCH 4, 1865.

In the glorious days of old,
When all manly words were gold,
The pledge of haughty Southern knight
Was held as true and kept as bright
As if it had been coined in heaven,
And to the world by angels given.

But when the curse of Slavery fell,
As though a pestilence from hell
Had poisoned all the land,
A direful demon took command;
And they who owed their country all,
Struck at her life, contrived her fall.

But first they broke their solemn word,
Before they drew the murderous sword,
Forgot their creed, so orthodox,
And scorned the sacred ballot-box;
Then here, where Freedom's temple stood,
Tried to let loose the tide of blood.

Oh! doubtful day, four years ago!
When, threatened by the assassin foe,
Our President was sworn to stand
By God and by his Native Land;
But traitors failed, because they knew
Their plots were clear to patriots true.

And when the fiends of civil war
Filled all the South with blood and fire,
Long swayed the dreadful, doubtful fight,
And the world shuddered at the sight;
Thousands of all our boldest braves
Fought, fell, and died in honored graves.

For days, for months, for lingering years,
This strife of kindred and this flow of tears,
Was grimly fought and bitterly maintained
Till none could tell which side had gained;
But now, at last, a rescued nation
Hails here her perfect vindication.

And God is good, for he has said,
(Oh voice to wake the myriad dead!)
If your first oath was sworn in gloom,
Unknowing then your fate or doom;
At your to-day's inauguration
You do behold your land's salvation.

No scowling traitors in this hour
Will dare to thwart the people's power;
No forsworn plotters can implore
That Freedom's temple may run o'er
With the heart's blood of him who won
The post twice filled by Washington.

For like to him so Lincoln ran
The race for Liberty and Man,
And like to him a people's voice
Proclaimed him twice the nation's choice;
And by this act have set their seal
To show the gratitude they feel.

Now as the President ascends
You marble fight, and lowly bends
Before the majesty of the laws,
And vows to serve his country's cause,
Nothing but victory for the Union
Will gladden all that vast communion.

Before him frown no angry foemen,
For all are friends and sturdy yoemen;
But gazing up and to him listening,
Behold the face of Johnson glistening—
He who in renowned December
Fought the great fight we all remember;

Who, without sign of fear or favor,
Struck 'gainst traitors with best endeavor—
Made them quail beneath his glances,
And fly before his bold advances,
And now, from rescued Tennessee,
Takes part in this, Our Jubilee.

Oh! History, with thy impartial pen,
Tell us in what age of godlike men
Hast thou been ever called to write
A page so wondrous and so bright?
Where is the struggle that can equal
That of which to-day's the sequel?

41051 -1

Fig. 3. "An Inaugural Poem, Dedicated to Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, and Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee." This broadside was printed by a press carried on a wagon in the presidential procession on March 4, 1865.

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Fig. 4. African Americans, both soldiers and civilians, attended the second inaugural in unprecedented numbers, as seen in this photograph by Alexander Gardner.

marching bands, companies of firemen with horse-drawn steam engines, and a "beautiful Temple of Liberty" on which it was intended that a number of young ladies would ride "but owing to the threatening state of the weather . . . their places were supplied by boys." The procession also included a "fine model" of the USS *Monitor*, firing two cannons from its turret, and a wagon bearing a printing press that printed an inaugural poem (fig. 3) during the parade. The elaborate procession made its way past thousands of spectators lining the sidewalks and crowding the windows, balconies, and roofs of buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue. If only the weather had cooperated the procession might have been more festive. Days of rain had turned the streets into a river of mud. The Army Corps of Engineers found the mess too soft to lay down pontoons. Police tried to confine onlookers to the sidewalks, especially those who could not swim, but a steady stream of visitors crossed the avenue, some even dashing across "in the most reckless manner, but fortunately no one is believed to have been lost."[7]

Security for the inaugural procession was a moot point since Lincoln was already at the Capitol signing legislation. He had gone to the Capitol unheralded and unnoticed earlier in the morning. As one reporter put it, the procession was "like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out."[8] Security might not have been needed to protect Lincoln during the procession, but it was a different matter altogether at the Capitol's East Front, where the inauguration ceremony would take place at noon on a platform built across the center steps.

Misfiled photographs (figs. 4, 5, 6) discovered in the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division less than ten years ago provide insight into the security precautions at the Capitol.[9] Taken just as the crowds assembled on that rainy morning, the photographs show line upon line of Union troops, with shouldered rifles, interspersed throughout the crowd. The spirit of the day may have been different, but the message was the same. Event organizers were well aware that numerous Confederate deserters, Southern sympathizers, and disgruntled Northern opponents of Lincoln's emancipation policies would likely be among those in the crowd. One drunken Virginian who had threatened to kill Lincoln was arrested, although it is not clear where in Washington he was arrested.[10] Given all this, the presence of armed troops was a necessary and proper precaution.

The composition of the Union troops at the Capitol made more than a security statement. Included in the array was a battalion of African American soldiers. Their presence acknowledged the role of United States Colored Troops in turning the tide of the Civil War. It also made a political statement about the finality of emancipation as a war goal. The composition of the crowd made the same statement. Reporters were struck by the numbers of African Americans dispersed throughout the crowd on the Capitol's East Front Grounds. The *Times*

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Fig. 5. Union soldiers assembled in lines within the crowd.

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Fig. 6. Lines of soldiers created a pathway for the presidential procession to enter the East Front plaza.

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Fig. 7. Alexander Gardner took several photographs of the second inaugural. This photograph is among the clearest showing Lincoln delivering the inaugural address.

of London estimated that "at least half the multitude were colored people."[11] The New York *Tribune* concluded that the inauguration presented "the negro in a new character." "One distinguishing feature of the procession and the assemblage," it reported, "was the presence of the negro as a citizen and as a soldier. No longer a slave and a chattel."[12]

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

The first Capitol ceremony on inauguration day was the swearing-in of Vice President Andrew Johnson in the Senate Chamber. Only those with tickets were admitted. By all accounts, Johnson made a spectacle of himself. He had been ill for weeks and took several glasses of "medicinal whiskey" to steady himself, which of course had the opposite effect. His rambling, virtually incoherent inaugural address mortified the assembled senators and dignitaries. Lincoln, who had taken a seat during the discourse, gave orders that Johnson not be allowed to say anything at the outdoor presidential swearing-in ceremony.[13] The presidential party and the ticketed guests marched from the Senate Chamber through the rotunda and out onto the East Front steps (fig. 7) into a gray, overcast day. Then, just as the crowd erupted in loud, prolonged, and enthusiastic cheers for the president, the clouds dispersed, sunshine illuminated the proceedings, and "the beautiful white Capitol seemed to assume a brighter hue, while the bronze Goddess of Liberty on the ample dome looked down for the first time on the inauguration of a President of the United States." It was as though the heavens had provided "a well accepted omen of the better days just dawning on the country."[14] Even Lincoln admitted later that "he was just superstitious enough to consider it a happy omen."[15]

His brief second inaugural address (fig. 8), which probably lasted only six or seven minutes, was a somber, deeply-felt, and articulate meditation on the meaning of the Civil War to the soul of America. To those in the North who saw the war as a divinely-ordained crusade and who sought to exact retribution on the conquered enemy, he urged mercy tempered by understanding. Both sides, he reminded listeners, "read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully." The last paragraph is the most famous of any presidential inaugural address: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for

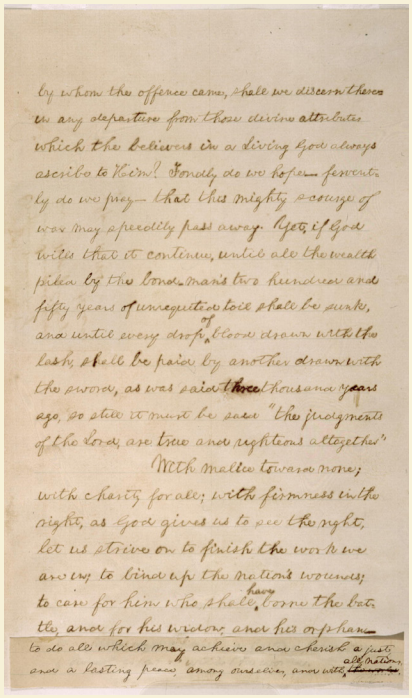

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Fig. 8. Written in Lincoln's hand, the final page of the "reading copy" of the second inaugural address bears his own corrections, including changing the final words from "the world" to "all nations."

him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Ronald C. White, Jr., who has written perhaps the most insightful analysis of Lincoln's second inaugural address, points out the speech's similarities to a Puritan jeremiad, a sermon in which the preacher identifies the cause of God's anger—"the offence of slavery"—and the punishment for that sin—"He gives to both North and South, this terrible war." The only fitting response to God's judgment is selfless love and reconciliation. If enmity continued, the war would have been in vain. White points out that in calling for reconciliation, Lincoln did not seek an emotional response, but rather the "tough, practical living actions that must replace retribution with 'charity.'"[16] The antislavery Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner nodded affirmatively during Lincoln's speech, and Frederick Douglass, as we've seen, considered it "a sacred effort." Charles Francis Adams, a young Union officer whose ancestors included two U.S. presidents, was in the crowd and observed, "This inaugural strikes me in its grand simplicity and directness as being for all time the historical keynote of this war."[17] Across the ocean, the British statesman, William E. Gladstone, conveyed his appreciation: "I am taken captive by so striking an utterance as this. . . . The address gives evidence of a moral elevation most rare in a statesman, or indeed in any man."[18]

Public response to the speech was divided. The Boston *Evening Transcript* thought it "a singular State Paper—made so by the times. . . . The President was lifted above the level upon which political rulers usually stand, and felt himself 'in the very presence of Providence.'" The London *Spectator* agreed: "No statesman ever uttered words stamped at once with the seal of so deep a wisdom and so true a simplicity."[19]

Many listeners in the crowd, at least those close enough to hear the words, and many other Americans who later would read the speech printed in the newspapers, were not as impressed. Many understandably wanted to celebrate the impending victory and sought punishment for the rebels. They expected to rejoice in a "mission accomplished" speech, not to be reminded of their own complicity in slavery or to be preached to about reconciliation and charity. Douglass noticed that the expressions of many of those around him were very different from his own; the New York *Herald* noted "a leaden stillness in the crowd" in its reaction to the speech.[20] Opposition newspapers heaped ridicule on the "slip-shod, so loose-jointed, so puerile" speech.[21] Such accounts criticized him for "abandoning all pretense of statesmanship."[22] The Democratic *Star of the North* (Bloomsburg, PA) resorted to satire, printing its own synopsis of the speech: "The Inaugural with the Bark Off."

> Fellow Countrymen : I made an inaugural address four years ago; there is no particular occasion for another.
> The public knows as much as I do about the progress of our arms. We have great hopes but we make no predictions. [Seward's department]
> Four years ago we all tried to avert war. Both parties hated to fight. War came.
> The slaves are one eight of the population, and a "peculiar and powerful" institution.
> "Somehow" they caused the war.
> All pray to the same God. He don't appear to be on either side. When He makes up His mind we will have to stand it.
> Meanwhile, without malice, let us charitably and firmly continue to cut each other's throats; taking care of such unfortunate people as may be widowed and orphaned; in order that we may not injure or harm one another, but maintain just and lasting peace among ourselves and other nations.[23]

President Lincoln, however, may have gotten the final word on the lasting impact of his second inaugural speech. Later that month he wrote to Thurlow Weed, a friend and New York editor, who had praised the speech. Lincoln admitted the speech was not "immediately popular." "Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them," he wrote. "To deny it, however, in

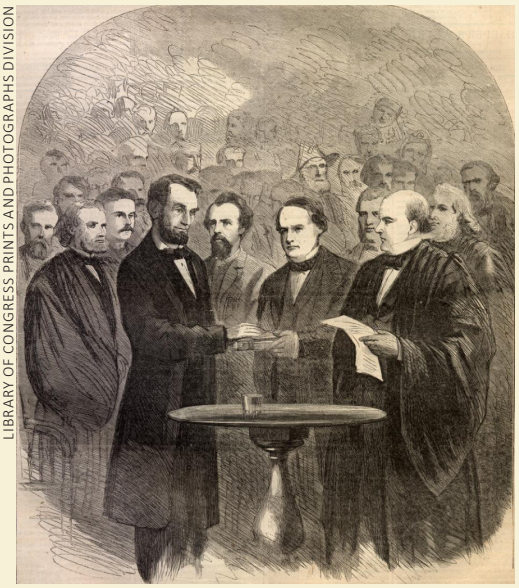

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Fig. 9. Harper's Weekly *published this engraving of Lincoln taking the oath of office administered by Chief Justice Chase in its March 18, 1865 issue. Note that the top of the inaugural table appears to be round or oblong, not square as Benjamin B. French described it. (left)*

Fig. 10. Benjamin Brown French fabricated the table used in Lincoln's second inaugural ceremony from cast-iron pieces left over from the construction of the Capitol Dome. He later donated it to the Massachusetts Historical Society. (right)

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this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, and, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it." In spite of its lack of immediate acceptance he did expect the speech "to wear as well as—perhaps better than—anything I have produced."[24] And indeed it has, ranking with the Gettysburg address as milestones of American oratory.

TAKING THE OATH OF OFFICE

After delivering the second inaugural address, President Lincoln took the oath of office administered by Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase (fig. 9). Lincoln and Chase stood beside a cast-iron table (fig. 10) made by Commissioner of Public Buildings Benjamin B. French (fig. 11) from decorative elements left over from the construction of the Capitol Dome.[25] Chase motioned for the clerk of the Supreme Court to present an open Bible, on which Lincoln placed his right hand as the oath was taken. As prescribed by the Constitution, the oath read: "I do solemnly swear 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." According to one eyewitness account, after taking the oath, "then solemnly repeating, 'So help me God!' he bent forward and reverently kissed the Book."[26]

It was long thought that George Washington had begun the practice of adding the "So help me God," tagline to the presidential oath. But no contemporary account has ever been found to substantiate that belief, nor that any of Washington's successors prior to Lincoln had done so.

Historians have discovered no other contemporary account that mentions Lincoln adding the "So help me God" benediction to the oath. The author of this reference was Noah Brooks (fig. 12), the Washington correspondent for the *Sacramento Daily*

DIVISION

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Fig. 11. Superintendent of Public Buildings Benjamin Brown French managed arrangements at the Capitol for the second inaugural. He later came to believe that he had prevented Booth from possibly assassinating Lincoln in the Capitol Rotunda. (left)

Fig. 12. Noah Brooks became a close friend of President Lincoln as a reporter for the Sacramento Daily Union. *He later wrote a memorable account of Lincoln's funeral in the Capitol Rotunda, describing the scene from a perch high up in the dome. (See Jane Armstrong Hudiburg's article on the Lincoln funeral in this issue.) (right)*

THE LINCOLN MUSEUM, FORT WAYNE, IN

Union and a close friend of Lincoln.[27]

As the inaugural ceremony at the Capitol concluded, the Marine Corps Band provided one final exercise in civic religion with the performance of "God Save Our President," set to a poem by Philadelphia businessman and poet Francis De Haes Janvier. The song's first stanza pays tribute to the setting ("the shrine of Liberty"), the historical context ("an undivided band"), and the purpose ("to elevate, with solemn rites, the ruler of our land"). Its final words provided a fitting conclusion to the inaugural ceremony; and if Lincoln had invoked divine assistance, it was reciprocated by those in attendance:

> God of our country! Seal his oath
> With Thy supreme assent.
> God save the Union of the States!
> God save our President.[28]

EPILOGUE: THE DEVIL IN THE SHADOWS

On May 12, 1865 as the trial of the conspirators in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln began, Samuel Knapp Chester, an actor and colleague of John Wilkes Booth (fig. 13) testified that Booth had tried to recruit him in the plot. During one of their conversations, Booth exclaimed, "What an excellent chance I had to kill the President, if I had wished, on inauguration-day."[29] Booth was present for the inaugural ceremony and had been in the Capitol, the guest of one of his paramours, Lucy Hale, the daughter of New Hampshire Senator John P. Hale. As the daughter of a senator, Lucy had been able to procure a ticket for Booth to enter the Capitol for the swearing in of Vice President Johnson and then to go out onto the east portico for Lincoln's inaugural.[30]

In 1956, Frederick Hill Meserve, the leading collector of Lincoln photographs, claimed to have identified Booth in one of the several photographs taken at the inauguration. Meserve identified not only Booth, but also his fellow conspirator, Lewis Paine, in the photograph.[31] Meserve's daughter and grandson, Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., later published a book of photographs pertaining to the Lincoln assassination. In it they claim to identify not only Booth and Paine, but also fellow conspirators George Atzerodt, David Herold, John Surratt and Edmund Spangler in the inaugural crowd.[32]

Whether the identification of Booth and the others is correct is somewhat beside the point given Booth's assertion that he could have killed Lincoln on March 4, "if I had wished." For in Chester's testimony, he added that Booth "said he was as near the President on that day as he was to me."[33] Certainly Booth wasn't that close to Lincoln on the inaugural platform; but he may well have come that close to him as the President passed through the Capitol Rotunda.

At least, that's the way Benjamin B. French remembered it. As superintendent of public buildings, French was responsible for the inaugural arrangements at the Capitol. He was in the rotunda as the presidential party proceeded to the east portico. He later recalled in a letter to his son, "As the procession was passing through the Rotunda toward the Eastern portico, a man jumped from the crowd into it behind the President. I saw him, & told [John W.] Westfall, one of my Policemen, to order him out. He took him by the arm & stopped him, when he began to wrangle & show fight. I went up to him face to face, & told him he must go back. He said he had a right to be there, & looked very fierce & angry that we would not let him go on, & asserted his right so strenuously, that I thought he was a new member of the House whom I did not know & I said to Westfall 'let him go.'" After the assassination, someone

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Fig. 13. John Wilkes Booth, who attended the second inaugural, later boasted that if he had wanted to, he had the perfect opportunity to kill Lincoln on that occasion.

told Westfall that Booth had been the one he had restrained in the Rotunda. Westfall asked French if he remembered the incident and then showed him a photograph of Booth; both agreed that Booth was the man. French concluded that Booth "meant to rush up behind the President & assassinate him, & in the confusion escape into the crowd again & get away. But, by stopping him as we did, the President got out of his reach," while admitting that "all this is mere surmise."[34]

A little over a month later, surmise became all too real as Booth determined to kill Lincoln. The play actor wrote, produced, directed, and stage managed the greatest—and most ignominious—role of his career: presidential assassin. He chose the stage with which he was most familiar, Ford's Theatre, not Lincoln's stage of the Capitol inaugural platform. In Booth's tortured mind, he would be the star, his would be the lines history would remember: "Sic semper tyrannis," "The South is avenged!" But Booth of course was wrong. He would not be remembered as an heroic avenger but as a demented villain. It was the martyred Lincoln that history would venerate. As a final indignity to Booth, the date of the assassination, Good Friday 1865, would forever link the martyred President with the sublime mystery of providential fate addressed in his second inaugural.

DONALD R. KENNON, prior to his retirement in May 2015, was chief historian and vice president of scholarship and education for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. He credits the society's founding president, the late Fred Schwengel, for instilling in him a love for all things Lincoln.

Notes

1. With apologies to Michael Burlingame, who titled the section on Lincoln's second inaugural "A Sacred Effort" in his invaluable two-volume biography of Lincoln (Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, 2 vols. [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008], 2:765-72). We both, of course, are quoting Frederick Douglass's estimation of the second inaugural address.

2. Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Boston: De Wolfe and Fiske, 1892), p. 444. Douglass had situated himself so that he could see and hear the entire inaugural proceedings. He observed the ceremony was "wonderfully quiet, earnest, and solemn. . . . The address sounded more like a sermon than like a state paper" (p. 441).

3. John Eaton in collaboration with Ethel Osgood Mason, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freemen: Reminiscences of the Civil War with Special Reference to the Work for the Contrabands and Freedom of the Mississippi Valley* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), p. 89.

4. Burlingame, *Lincoln*, 2:765. Ronald C. White, Jr., who has written a book-length study of the second inaugural address, calls it simply "Lincoln's greatest speech" (Ronald C. White, Jr., *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002]).

5. Washington, D.C. *Evening Star*, Mar. 4, 1865, and New York Herald, Mar. 6, 1865.

6. Washington, D.C. *Evening Star*, Mar. 4, 1865.

7. Ibid.

8. *Sacramento Daily Union*, Apr. 10, 1865.

9. "News from the Library of Congress," Jan. 16, 2008, http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2008/08-012.html (accessed June 18, 2015); and Kitty Eisele, "Uncovered Photos Offer View of Lincoln Ceremony," Feb. 18, 2008, NPR, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=19094867 (accessed June 18, 2015).

10. "The Reported Plot to Assassinate the President," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar. 8, 1865, which reported the arrest of Thomas Clement of Alexandria, Virginia, for bragging in "gross and profane language" that he had come to Washington to kill the President.

11. Cited in Ronald C. White, Jr., *A. Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2009), p. 659.

12. New York *Tribune*, Mar. 6, 1865.

13. Burlingame, *Lincoln*, 2:766.

14. Washington, D.C. *Evening Star*, Mar. 4, 1865; *Sacramento Daily Union*, Apr. 10, 1865.

15. Quoted in Burlingame, *Lincoln*, 2:766.

16. White, *Lincoln's Greatest Speech*, quote on p. 179.

17. Adams quoted in ibid., p. 184.

18. Quoted in Burlingame, *Lincoln*, 2:772.

19. Ibid., 2:771-72.

20. New York *Herald*, Mar. 6, 1865. Frederick Douglass used much the same phrase, remarking on the "leaden stillness about the crowd" (Douglass, *Life and Times*, p. 441).

21 Burlingame, *Lincoln*, 2:771.

22. New York *World*, Mar. 6, 1865.

23. *Star of the North* (Bloomsburg, PA), Mar. 15, 1865.

24. Lincoln to Thurlow Weed, Mar. 15, 1865, in Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* (1989; reprint ed., Library of America, 2012), p. 689.

25. On his 66th birthday, French began crating the inaugural table to send it to the Massachusetts Historical Society. In his diary entry for that day, September 4, 1866, he described the table he had made several years earlier from three pieces of iron left from construction of the Capitol Dome: "the leaf, about 2 feet square, cut from a piece of a broken panel; the standard[,] one of the balustres, and the only one left of the balustrade around the opening through which the picture on the concave surface of the Dome is seen; the feet[,] one of the ornaments of the inner surface of the Dome. This table I had carried to the Capitol on the morning of March 4, 1864 [sic.], and placed on the platform erected for the second inaugural of Abraham Lincoln, the good, as President of the United States; and it stood before him, with a tumbler of water upon it for his use, when he delivered his inaugural" (Donald B. Cole and John J. McDonough, eds., *Benjamin Brown French Witness to the Young Republic: A Yankee's Journal, 1828-1870* [Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1989], p. 514).

26. *Sacramento Daily Union*, Apr. 10, 1865, p. 8, col. 6. It's not clear if the Bible used in the second inaugural was the same one used in the first inaugural. That Bible is in the Library of Congress and was used by President Barack Obama when he took the oath of office in 2009. The Bible Lincoln used in the second inaugural was opened, possibly at random, to Isaiah, 5:27-28.

27. On three occasions Brooks repeated in print his story that Lincoln had repeated "So help me God" at the end of the oath. The first was in his dispatch to the *Sacramento Daily Union* that he sent on March 12, 1865, and which was printed in the April 10, 1865 issue. He repeated the same account in 1895 in "Lincoln's Reelection," *The Century Magazine*, 49 (Apr. 1895): 865-72, which became chapter seven of his book, *Washington in Lincoln's Time* (New York: The Century Company, 1895), pp. 216-41, quote on p. 240.

28. The full text of the song was printed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar. 6, 1865.

29. Ben. Perley Poore, ed., *The Conspiracy Trial for the Murder of the President* (Boston: J.E. Tilton, 1865), pp. 50-51. For the most detailed and best account of Booth's actions at the second inaugural, see the definitive study recently published in Terry Alford, *Freedom's Fool: The Life of John Wilkes Booth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 223-27. Surprisingly, Alford's book, the product of 25 years of research, is the only full-length biography of Booth's life.

30. Technically, John P. Hale was a former senator; his term ended on March 4, 1865 following the inauguration of Vice President Johnson and the swearing in of the new senatorial class. Lincoln had nominated Hale as U.S. minister to Spain, a post he held until 1869. Lucy Hale later married Senator William E. Chandler. Their grandson, highly decorated Rear Admiral Theodore E. Chandler, was mortally wounded by a kamikaze attack on his flagship, the USS Louisville in January 1945.

31. Frederick Hill Meserve, "The Prologue to Assassination," *Life*, Feb. 13, 1956, pp. 14-15.

32. Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., *Twenty Days: A Narrative in Text and Pictures of the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the Twenty Days and Nights that Followed* (1965; reprint ed., New York: Castle Books, 1993), pp. 31-35.

33. Poore, *Conspiracy Trial*, pp. 50-51.

34. Benjamin B. French to Francis French, Apr. 24, 1865, as quoted in "Presidential Inaugurations: Words and Images" on the Library of Congress American Memory website, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/piwi03.html (accessed June 18, 2015). Robert Strong, one of the Capitol police officers who helped subdue Booth, corroborated French's account in an affidavit dated March 1876 (Ward Hill Lamon, *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln, 1847-1865*, ed. Dorothy Lamon Teillard [1895; reprint ed., Washington, DC: The Editor, 1911], pp. 272-73].

"THE GREATEST PAGEANT EVER TENDERED":

Reporting Lincoln's Funeral, Procession, and Services at the Capitol

JANE ARMSTRONG HUDIBURG

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Fig. 1. Lincoln's body lying in state in the East Room of the White House, sketched in pencil on paper by Alfred R. Waugh, April 19, 1865. Waugh was a staff artist for Harper's Weekly and this sketch was the basis for the engraving published in the May 6, 1865 issue of Harper's Weekly.

Washington's press correspondents noted the eerie similarities. Six weeks after Abraham Lincoln's second presidential inauguration in March, the Capitol featured "the same scene, the same actors, the same spectators." There was the same crowd "assembled to do him honor," the same long lines of soldiers, and many of the same faces: senators, representatives, cabinet members, and "Andrew Johnson quite as conspicuous." One *New York Herald* reporter, though, considered the "terrible change." Then Lincoln "spoke pious words of peace, of good will, and of his steadfast determination to preserve the Union. Now he spoke still more powerfully in his death, and every man felt the force of the lesson taught by that cold, still form."[1]

In the days following Lincoln's assassination, newspapers across the country recorded such observations, their Washington-based writers equipped with both the skills and the access needed to witness and preserve the official acts of mourning. On April 19, 1865, the reporters stationed themselves in the White House East Room, as clergy and guests gathered around Lincoln's coffin for the funeral. Then, they scrambled along the hearse's processional route to the Capitol's Rotunda for the ceremonial "burial" service and lying in state.[2] Government officials not only sanctioned their presence, but placed the press in the best locations to view the "obsequies." In fact, according to the same *Herald* reporter, "The authorities felt that the occasion was historical, and desired that not one item should be omitted."[3] As a result, Lincoln's legacy includes multiple, comprehensive accounts confirming that the ceremonies were among the most impressive in American history.

Sociologist Barry Schwartz argues that, more so than the shocking assassination, these extraordinary rituals, with their unprecedented public participation, transformed Abraham Lincoln from a mortal president, assailed by opponents on all sides, to a sacred symbol.[4] Lincoln's iconic status, however, could not have been achieved without the press. The Washington correspondents relayed the city's events to a national audience, describing "the greatest pageant ever tendered" with such emotionally-packed details that the scenes are as vivid today as a modern-day movie.[5]

The funeral planning began almost before Lincoln's death, at 7:22 a.m., April 15, the morning after John Wilkes Booth shot the president at Ford's Theatre. With the newly widowed Mary Todd Lincoln incapacitated by grief, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton assumed the leadership role. Stanton

assigned ceremonial logistics to Assistant Treasury Secretary George Harrington, while he and Benjamin B. French, the commissioner of public buildings, took responsibility for all tasks related to Lincoln's body, ensuring its safe transfer from the Petersen House, the private residence where Lincoln died, to the White House.[6] There, Stanton oversaw the autopsy, the embalming and the dressing, choosing Lincoln's inaugural black Brooks Brothers suit for the burial outfit. As recounted by writer Benjamin Franklin Morris, "the turned-down collar and the black cravat were adjusted precisely as they were wont to be seen in his life-time. The face and features looked quite natural, and much credit was due to the embalmer, Dr. Charles D. Brown."[7]

The solid walnut coffin (fig. 1), with its hinged, satin-lined face lid, allowed a clear view of Brown's work. Costing more than one thousand dollars, it was "a magnificent affair, indeed."[8] Morris described the casket as "lined with lead, covered with superb black broadcloth, and with four massive silver handles upon each side. In the spaces between the handles were ornamental figures, formed with silver cord, resembling the leaf of a shamrock." Silver stars adorned the shamrocks, as well as each end of the casket.[9]

In contrast to the coffin, with its "exceedingly good taste and fine workmanship," the White House catafalque bore the signs of a hasty construction. Designed by French, and built on April 16, Easter Sunday, it was the first of Lincoln's several funeral biers. The massive structure included a platform, sixteen feet long, ten feet wide, which supported a box-shaped stand, four feet high. Covered in "black and white silk, satin, and velvet fabric," the catafalque featured a soaring canopy, creating such as imposing presence that reporters referred to it as the "temple of death."[10]

Though dominated by the catafalque, the East Room, itself, according to a *Washington Chronicle* reporter, "was far more artistically prepared for the coming ceremonies." The plates of four large mirrors "were covered with white crepe, while their frames were hidden by the falling folds of a black drapery" that also covered the windows' lace curtains. "Through the dark shadows of the catafalco (sic) the light seemed to struggle in dim religious rays that stole rather than leaped back from the silver ornaments of the coffin and the shrouded surfaces of the polished mirrors."[11]

On Tuesday, after waiting in line for several hours, 25,000 members of the general public filed past the catafalque and coffin to observe Lincoln's first lying in state, while thousands more, denied entry, stood outside the White House. The following day, April 19, four ministers and six hundred invited guests gathered for the funeral at noon. While many in attendance remained standing, fifteen reporters received chairs, "all draped, which were especially reserved by Secretary Harrington, of the Arrangement Committee."[12] The press, so situated, recorded each word spoken over Lincoln's body, including those uttered by the president's own minister, Phineas D. Gurley, the pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, who had earlier kept vigil over his dying parishioner. Now in his funeral sermon, Dr. Gurley lamented, "It was a cruel, cruel hand, that dark hand of the assassin, which smote our honored, wise, and noble President, and filled the land with sorrow."[13]

Long before the East Room funeral concluded at 2 pm, thousands of Washingtonians and out-of-towners gathered along the funeral's processional route (fig. 2), spanning the 1.6 mile distance between the White House and the Capitol on Pennsylvania Avenue. Bolstered by the beautiful, sunny weather, the "whole city thronged upon the streets." "The sidewalks were densely lined" and the "roofs, porticos, windows and all elevated points were occupied by interested spectators." Premium locations came with a price, though, ranging from twenty-five cents for a tree-top perch to ten dollars for a window view. Meanwhile, at street level, "boys pressed through the mass selling crape, and found many purchasers. Everybody wore crape; everybody was silent, grave, solemn; everybody stood and patiently awaited for hours; there was no disorder, no disquiet—all were chief mourners." Perhaps the African American population, or "colored" as was the term of the day, expressed a deeper despondency; "they talked in low tones of him that was gone as the savior of their race, their liberator." All the spectators, though, whites and blacks together, seemed

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Fig. 2. Crowds view the funeral procession on Pennsylvania Avenue, April 19, 1865. Flags and black crepe can be seen on some of the buildings along the avenue.

"to feel that the great national family had lost its head, that this was the funeral of the foremost man in all this world."[16]

As the crowd waited in anticipation, Lincoln's pallbearers, a rotating group of senators, representatives, military officers, and civilians, lifted the coffin onto a horse-drawn carriage (fig. 3).[17] Minute guns fired near St. John's Church, the City Hall and the Capitol, while church and firehouse bells tolled throughout the city. According to Noah Brooks, the *Sacramento Bee's* Washington correspondent, and a Lincoln family friend, "just before the procession began to move, the Twenty-Second United States Colored Infantry (organized in Pennsylvania), landed from Petersburg and marched up to a position on the avenue, and when the head of the column came up, played a dirge, and headed the procession to the Capitol." [18]

The *New York Times* provided additional information regarding the order of procession (fig. 4), beginning with the "detachment of colored troops," then the other regiments and military officers, then the "the hearse, drawn by six white horses—the coffin prominent to every beholder . . . . Then followed Physicians of the late President . . . . Capt. ROBERT LINCOLN and little TAD, the President's favorite son, in a carriage, and TOMMY [Lincoln's brother] behind." An assortment of diplomats, judges, senators, representatives, state delegations, clergy, and clerks followed. "Then came one of the saddest scenes in the entire column, a battalion of scarred and maimed veterans, with bandaged limbs and heads, with an arm or leg gone, but hobbling along on

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Fig. 3. The funeral carriage that conveyed Lincoln's body from the Executive Mansion to the Capitol, April 19, 1865.

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Fig. 4. The funeral procession as depicted in the May 6, 1865 issue of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.