



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Monday, January 20, 1969 - The Inaugural

Great excitement at the Capitol, Jo and I sat on the platform, first row behind the Cabinet in front of the diplomatic corps. Cold, but no rain. Family all down in front under TV stand.

Most outstanding moment - fanfare and Richard and Pat Nixon come to top of steps, stand at attention for musical salute. Expression on his face was unforgettable - this was the time! He had arrived, he was in full command, someone said he felt he saw rays coming from his eyes. Great ovation. Then slowly, dignified, down the steps to the front of the platform.

Ceremony very good, address outstanding. So many quotable lines, it will be used over and over. Then "Hail to the Chief" for the President - almost impossible to believe.

Then to room 206 for signing the first official papers. President, Mrs. Nixon, John Ehrlichman, Secret Service and clerk. Nominations for Cabinet and UN. No one had a pen, so he used my Pentel to sign them all. Awkward, no one knew what to say. President very pensive, quiet, drinking cup of coffee.

Then luncheon, President with Inauguration Committee, we with Cabinet. Rogers asked Stans to say grace. The parade, President exuberant - reacting to Governors, bands, floats, greeting VIP's in stand. Very cold.

Then to White House. Offices pretty well set up - President to family reception in Mansion. Called me on phone, I urged him to come to West Wing to see his office - fires in fireplaces. That intrigued him, paused, asked like little kid "Is the dog there?" (ref. to Irish Setter we gave him - not here yet).

Then the six Inaugural balls - carried through in fine form. Good witty speeches, very enthusiastic, friendly, obviously relishing it all.

And to the White House for the first night.