

Former Presidents Who Attended Inaugurations – And Didn't

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The largest Oval Office gathering of Presidents in history took place in 2008, with former Presidents Bush, Clinton and Carter, President-Elect Obama and incumbent President W. Bush.

They may not like him, but they'll be there.

Despite the fact that Bill Clinton's wife ran a hard campaign against the president-elect for the presidency, that Jimmy Carter spoke of him as a danger and that George W. Bush refused to vote or suggest any remote support for his fellow Republican, all three of the four living former American Presidents have agreed to attend the January 20, 2017 inauguration ceremony. Only former President George Bush will not attend, given the 91 year old's infirmities.

Outgoing President Truman and former President Hoover at Eisenhower's 1953 Inaugural.

The presence of former Presidents, other than the outgoing one, at the inaugural ceremony of a latter successor is a relatively recent custom, not so routine as to be guaranteed as a genuine tradition, although here and there up until the 21st century, there were examples of it.

This, of course, doesn't count those numerous future Presidents would attend inaugurations, whether they were vice presidents, senators, congressmen, governors or held some other official position.

George Washington (left) at his second Inauguration in 1793, after the ceremony with his vice president (and future second President) John Adams and his Secretary of State (and future third President) Thomas Jefferson, imagined by illustrator J.L.G Ferris.

For example, at the first and second inaugurations of the first President, George Washington, on April 30, 1789 and March 4, 1793, In their roles as Vice President, Secretary of State, and U.S. Congressman, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison attended George Washington's first inaugural, on April 30, 1789. Adams and Jefferson were again at Washington's second inaugural, on March 4, 1793, as was U.S. Senator James Monroe.

Although outgoing President Polk and his wife attended the inaugural of his successor Zachary Taylor, former President and Mrs. Tyler (standing in last row, at left) did not – despite being depicted as present in this contemporary engraving.

The thought of such gatherings, however, did occur early on in the presidency as proven by an imaginative engraving of Zachary Taylor's March 5, 1849 inauguration ceremony when, beside the outgoing President James Polk and his wife Sarah, the image included former President John Tyler and his wife Julia.

The Tylers did not attend.

Also depicted was the incoming Vice President Millard Fillmore, who would succeed to the presidency sixteen months later upon President Taylor's death.

FDR had three more inaugurals than usual but at none of them did his sole living predecessor attend. Of course, his wife Eleanor was at all of them, seen here with the President at his second one in 1937.

There have been about thirty inaugurations when there was no President in attendance other than the one being sworn-in. This includes the swearing-in ceremonies of those presidents who inherited the position as vice presidents upon the death of their predecessor, Tyler (1841), Fillmore (1850), Johnson (1865), Roosevelt (1901), Coolidge (1923), Truman (1945), Johnson (1963), and resignation, Ford (1974). It *may* also include Chester Arthur, as explained shortly. Or it *may not*.

It was also the case for most of the second swearing-in of Presidents elected to their own full term: of course George Washington in 1789 and 1793 who had no predecessors, Jefferson (1805), Madison (1813), Monroe (1821), Jackson (1833), Lincoln (1865), Grant (1873), McKinley (1901), Roosevelt (1905), Wilson (1917), Truman (1949), LBJ (1965), Nixon (1973), Reagan (1985), Clinton (1997) and for the second, third and fourth swearing-in ceremonies of Franklin Roosevelt (1937, 1941, 1945).

Well past midnight on his last day as president 1801 John Adams signed judicial appointments of Federalists that would trouble his successor Thomas Jefferson. Then, he left town – refusing to participate in a symbolic transition of power to Jefferson.

The other three circumstances where there was no other President at an inaugural other than the one being sworn-in were moments of such personal bitterness on the part of the outgoing President towards the incoming one that the one or the other refused to appear together.

The most startling was the first time it occurred, in 1801, when incumbent second President John Adams of the Federalist Party left Washington in the early morning hours on the day of anti-Federalist Thomas Jefferson's inauguration.

Happier times: a depiction of Adams and Jefferson working together as colleagues before either became President.

Jefferson had served as Adams' Vice President, but in the patterns of seeking the presidency and voting in the early days of the Republic, he ran against the President – and won. The two men had once been close friends, serving on the Continental Congress committee charged with drafting the Declaration of Independence in 1776. As fate had it, they would die on the same day as former Presidents, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration, July 4, 1826,

Before they ran against each other as President for the first time, in 1824, Jackson (left) was the guest of honor at a reception hosted by then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and his wife Louisa, both far right.

Similarly, although once friends, when Andrew Jackson defeated incumbent President John Quincy Adams, the latter did as his father had done and skipped his successor's ceremony, in 1829.

Adams considered Jackson an uncouth wild man, vain, unable to control his language, violent in temper and limited in intelligence.

Although Ulysses S. Grant had served as Secretary of War in the Cabinet of President Andrew Johnson, who succeeded to the presidency upon Lincoln's assassination, the two men had developed contempt for one another.

After Grant won the presidency in 1868, their mutual resentment solidified into insult. Grant let it be known that he would neither ride with or speak to Johnson.

President Andrew Johnson and his interim War Secretary Ulysses Grant share an outdoor banquet during the former's national tour – before their mutual resentment solidified into full-on detestation.

There was some thought to having two separate carriages holding both Presidents, riding behind each other, but the idea was abandoned. Instead, Johnson remained working in the White House.

Reminded that his presence was expected at the Capitol for the Grant inaugural, Johnson simply continued working until the stroke of noon, signing minor legislative bills until his presidency expired.

Except for those three instances, every other incoming President who took office by election to the job has had the presence of the outgoing President appear with him at the inauguration, a visible symbol of the transition of power in a democracy.

The earliest examples of there being more than two Presidents in attendance at an inaugural, the outgoing and the incoming, involved two former Presidents who had returned to live in Washington to assume official federal positions, one in the legislative branch, the other in the judiciary.

Adams skipped Jackson's inaugural.

After his bitter defeat by Jackson in 1828, John Quincy Adams had a form of revenge by being elected to the United States Congress, serving from 1830 until his death in 1848.

Although he made note of Jackson's 1833 second swearing-in ceremony in his diary, Adams stayed home where he received reports on what he called "brief" and "smooth" inaugural address by his nemesis.

The 1837 Inaugural arrangements included no recognition of former President Adams' presence.

Adams did attend the 1837 inauguration of Martin Van Buren simply as a witness, not with any seat of honor or privilege as a former President, but simply with the huddle of Congressmen.

Andrew Jackson had made the drive to the Capitol from the White House with Van Buren, but was by then too feeble to withstand the public ceremony and left for Tennessee.

By making the drive with Van Buren, Jackson did participate in the inaugural, fulfilling the ceremonial aspect of transition as witnessed by the public who lined the streets to cheer.

Thus, the 1837 Inaugural of Martin Van Buren qualifies as the first one during which there were multiple former Presidents participating, even if only at separate events of the day.

Adams unwittingly continued this tradition for the next two inaugurations of men elected as president, both of whom he viewed dimly, William Henry Harrison in 1841 and James Polk in 1845. Again, he was perceived not as a former President but as a member of Congress and accorded no honors.

Former President Adams, right, found the inaugural of incoming Harrison, left, to be “showy” and “shabby.” He also thought his own photographic image to be “hideous.”

At the 1841 inauguration of William Henry Harrison, for which the outgoing Van Buren rode in a carriage behind the President-Elect who led the march to the Capitol by riding on a white horse.

Adams watched and listened, but without interaction with either Van Buren or Harrison. He deemed the ordeal to be “showy” but “shabby.”

Former President Adams took delight in watching incoming President Polk having to shout his inaugural address to a “sea of umbrellas” under which nobody could hear him.

He seemed to take fiendish delight in the fact that Polk’s 1845 inaugural address took place in a driving rain and was delivered to a “sea of umbrellas.” He had no contact that day with either Polk or outgoing President John Tyler. So, in 1841 and 1845, as in 1839, the grand total of the presidential fraternity in attendance was *three*.

In a sign of Victorian Buckeye Republican solidarity, the 1881 swearing-in ceremony of incoming James Garfield, from Mentor, Ohio, his outgoing predecessor and friend Rutherford Hayes of Fremont, Ohio was, as expected, present.

Hayes (purple) and Grant (red) witnessed Garfield’s inauguration.

Also in attendance that year, however, was also former President Ulysses S. Grant, who had been born in Point Pleasant, Ohio.

So, for the first time since in 36 years, there were again *three* presidents at an inaugural.

Two of those three would, sadly, gather again just six months later, not with Garfield but rather his successor.

The swearing-in ceremony of Vice President Chester Arthur in 1881 presents an interesting dilemma in terms of how to characterize whether any former Presidents witnessed his transition to power following President James Garfield’s succumbing to death after being shot two months earlier.

Arthur took his first oath in his Lexington Avenue brownstone.

When word reached Arthur, he was at his Lexington Avenue brownstone in New York, just a few blocks from Gramercy Park and there he took his oath of office, the first time a President was sworn into office outside of the official capital city of the nation.

It was this odd circumstance that led congressional leaders to convince him to repeat the ceremony two days later, as if it would be unquestionably legitimized if it took place in Washington, D.C. and was performed by the Chief Justice.

An illustrated newspaper depicted new President Chester Arthur joined by former President Grant (no sign of former President Hayes here) mourning over the open casket of the late President Garfield.

When Arthur repeated his oath of office on September 22, 1881, in the U.S. Capitol Building's Vice President's Room, two of his predecessors were there to witness it, former Presidents Ulysses Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes.

Both Grant and Hayes were in the capital city to attend the funeral of President Garfield.

That made *three* of the fraternity in 1881.

In 1850, Fillmore had been prevailed upon to repeat his oath of office in front of the public, in the House of Representatives chamber of the Capitol. Later, Coolidge would do likewise, after having been sworn into office by his father at their Vermont farmhouse, upon Harding's 1923 death, repeating the ceremony in his Washington, D.C. vice presidential residence, a Willard Hotel suite.

The question of whether or not the presence of Grant and Hayes witnessing the Arthur's second ceremonial swearing-in qualifies his as one of the earliest examples of former Presidents in attendance is a matter of semantics.

After Chief Justice Roberts flubbed the words of the oath which Barack Obama repeated at his 2009 inaugural, a second ceremony was held in the White House with the precise words spoken, to satisfy tradition sticklers.

Technically, the moment a president dies the vice president simply *becomes* president. Similarly, questions about a delay of time before the noon ceremony, a full and correct repetition of the words of the oath, or whether the president-elect uses the non-Constitutionally mandated phrase "so help me God," are moot: at the stroke of noon, the president-elect becomes the president, whether he has repeated the oath of office or not.

Whether stickler traditionalists would seek to disqualify the inaugurals of Van Buren in 1837 Harrison in 1841 and Polk in 1845 as having multiple former presidents in attendance because John Quincy Adams was not invited as a guest in that capacity, or that of Arthur in 1881 with Grant and Hayes watching because it was a second, ceremonial one, there can be no question about the first presidential inauguration of the 20th century where there were multiple Presidents.

Former President Taft, in his capacity as Chief Justice swears-in incoming President Hoover, as outgoing President Coolidge watches at right.

That event was the March 4, 1929 inauguration of Herbert Hoover.

Along with his outgoing predecessor, Calvin Coolidge, standing right there on the public platform watching the oath of office being delivered was another former President even closer to the action.

It was, in fact, the man who was facing Hoover asking him to raise his right hand and repeat after him, the Chief Justice of the United States William Howard Taft.

Taft, left, swears in Coolidge (right) as Mrs. Coolidge watches from the middle.

So, there were *three* again.

Despite having served his own term as President (in large part to please his wife Nellie Taft who was accused to her face by President Theodore Roosevelt of wanting the presidency more than her husband), William Howard Taft had only been ambitious for one job; in 1921 President Warren Harding granted his predecessor that wish, naming him as Chief Justice of the United States.

Thus, even though Warren Harding had died only nineteen months earlier and Woodrow Wilson had died only thirteen months earlier, Calvin Coolidge March 4, 1925's inauguration had the presence of a recent former President, as did his repeated ceremonial oath in 1923 at the Willard Hotel.

Former President Taft (right) reviewed the 1929 Inaugural parade with the new President and First Lady, Herbert and Lou Hoover (center).

It had, at least, gone back up to *two*.

Lucretia Garfield (left) beside her husband, new President James Garfield, reviewing his 1881 Inaugural Parade with, right, outgoing President and Mrs. Hayes.

Unlike John Quincy Adams presence at the 1837 Van Buren Inaugural, 1841 Harrison Inaugural and 1845 Polk Inaugural where his status as a congressman, rather than as a former President was recognized, it was not a matter of his chief justiceship trumping his presidency when it came to Taft at the 1929 Hoover inaugural.

After his judicial duties, Taft was recognized with a special seat of honor in the reviewing stand of the inaugural parade, the event that followed the swearing-in ceremony.

The Trumans in the 1961 parade stand with JFK and LBJ.

This was a privilege enjoyed only twice before.

The first time it occurred when when outgoing President Hayes was invited with his wife Lucy to share the honors with the incoming President James Garfield and his wife Lucretia.

Grover Cleveland and outgoing President Chester Arthur reviewing the 1885 inaugural parade together.

It was also an honor accorded to outgoing President Chester Arthur by his successor Grover Cleveland at the latter's first inaugural, on March 4, 1885.

Certainly no other Chief Justice has ever been invited to do so.

It was an honor that would also be granted to three other former Presidents who attended inaugurals of their successors, Hoover in 1953, Truman in 1961 and Bush in 2001 and 2005.

Former President Bush reviews 2001 Inaugural parade with his son, the new president.

Except for the presence of outgoing President Hoover at his successor's 1933 swearing-in, no former Presidents appeared at the three subsequent inaugurals of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1937, 1940, and 1945. *One, one, one.*

Former President Herbert Hoover sits with new First Lady Mamie Eisenhower as the new President Dwight Eisenhower reviews his 1953 Inaugural parade.

Despite developing a friendship with former President Hoover, Harry Truman did not apparently extend an invitation for him to attend the 1949 Inauguration, making the incumbent the sole president at his inauguration that year. *One*.

It took the next incoming President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to invite his friend and fishing buddy former President Hoover to his 1953 Inaugural and boost the number of presidents at an Inaugural again for the first time in twenty years.

Former President Hoover, upper left, watches Eisenhower take his second public oath of office in 1957.

With the presence of outgoing President Truman, along with Hoover and Ike, it was back up to *three*.

With just Hoover as the only former president at Ike's second inaugural in 1957, it was back down to *two*.

John F. Kennedy seemed intent on breaking or at least matching the record of fraternity trios set in the 19th century.

There was not only him and outgoing President Eisenhower in attendance, but he had also invited the two living former Presidents, Truman and Hoover. That would have broken the record for a fraternity total of four.

Alas, the raging snowstorm that plagued the JFK Inauguration prevented former President Hoover's airplane from landing and it had to return him to Florida.

The 1961 JFK Inaugural where six successive Presidents and First Ladies (and one former First Lady) sat together on the podium: Gerald and Betty Ford (brown), Pat Nixon (blue) Mamie Eisenhower (red) Lady Bird Johnson (green) Edith Wilson (purple), Jacqueline Kennedy (beige) Dwight Eisenhower (grey) John F. Kennedy (white), Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon (yellow), and Harry and Bess Truman (orange).

Thus, JFK could count only himself, outgoing President Eisenhower and former President Truman.

Pat Nixon, Mamie Eisenhower, Lady Bird Johnson and Jacqueline Kennedy (first row), JFK sisters Pat Lawford, Eunice Shriver and Edith Wilson, 1961 inaugural.

Three again.

There is historical consolation, however, to the 1961 JFK Inauguration.

Also in attendance were former First Ladies Edith Wilson and Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as Bess Truman who joined her husband.

Combined with Jacqueline Kennedy and outgoing First Lady Mamie Eisenhower, that meant that there was a record number of *five* First Ladies there.

If one counts the future Presidents and First Ladies Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson, Richard and Pat Nixon, Gerald and Betty Ford, who were also there, that's a record-breaking grand total of six successive Presidents over a third of a century, covering 1945 to 1977, in addition to an extra tally of eighteen years of two earlier First Ladies.

Eleanor Roosevelt chose not to sit on the platform with other Presidents and First Ladies at the 1961 JFK Inaugural.

Thirteen of the fourteen principals all sat on the Inaugural stand. Eleanor Roosevelt chose to instead sit in the diplomatic section facing them all, so she could watch it all directly.

For his 1965 inauguration, Lyndon B. Johnson so badly wanted his two living predecessors, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower to attend that he cajoled them in personal conversations on December 14, 1964, via his legendary recorded phone calls. Both of the elderly men suggest that their wives Bess Truman and Mamie Eisenhower were running their lives and had final say. First is his call to Truman, home in Missouri:

Here are President Johnson's two phone calls to his two predecessors, both made on December 14, 1964.

Despite former President Truman's intention of being there for the festivities, he ultimately did not attend, almost certainly because Mrs. Truman prevented it out of concern for her husband's fragile health.

Eisenhower explained to President Johnson that he and his wife were soon heading to their winter home in Palm Desert, California, a transcontinental trip the former First Lady would only make by train.

Ike didn't want to take the train back to LBJ's 1965 inaugural from his winter in California.

It was simply unfeasible for them to make another round-trip by railroad to appear at the ceremony. With neither of the former Presidents attending the 1965 inaugural, the count was back to *one*.

Mamie Eisenhower being escorted to her seat on the 1969 Nixon inaugural stand.

At his first inauguration on January 20, 1969, Richard Nixon invited Eisenhower but by then the former president, hospitalized at nearby Walter Reed Hospital, was too weak and frail to appear. His wife Mamie Eisenhower did attend as his representative.

Ike died less than three months later.

Old colleagues LBJ and Nixon were chummy at the 1969 inaugural of the latter.

It is not clear if Nixon invited former President Truman. If he had, Truman would almost certainly have not attended. Not only was he also in frail health but he detested Nixon.

Only the outgoing President, Lyndon B. Johnson, was in attendance. *Two*.

Within a matter of just weeks before the January 20, 1973 inauguration of Richard Nixon for his second term, one of the two remaining former Presidents, Harry Truman.

Just days after his 1973 inaugural, Nixon attended LBJ's funeral, standing beside the widowed Lady Bird Johnson.

Ailing LBJ was unable to attend. In fact, he died two days after the second Nixon inaugural. Thus, Nixon was the sole president in attendance on his own big day. So, for Nixon's second time: just *one*.

Nixon's August 8, 1974 resignation led to the swearing-in ceremony of his vice president Gerald Ford as president that same day, but Nixon left the premises of the White House, after delivering his farewell speech, before Ford repeated the presidential oath.

Nixon was present in the hours preceding Ford's inaugural but left before the oath was taken, becoming a former President as his plane flew him home to California; thus he was not technically in attendance.

Ford: *one*.

At Jimmy Carter's 1977 Inauguration, only his immediate predecessor, the incumbent President Ford was in attendance, this despite a razor-thin defeat by the new president.

It is unclear whether Carter invited former president Nixon, then living in San Clemente, California and still being largely shunned by the political establishment of both parties because of the Watergate scandal and his resignation, or whether Nixon chose not to attend. Carter: The count rose back up to *two* presidents.

It seems likely, however, that Carter did invite Nixon, based on several factors.

Whatever disdain he may have continued to feel for Nixon as a result of the damage the latter had done to the office of the presidency.

Carter invited Nixon back to the White House for the first time, for a 1979 state dinner honoring Deng Xiaoping, the first vice premier of the People's Republic of China.

He nevertheless honored his predecessor by inviting the former President Nixon back to the White House for the first time, as a guest for a January 29, 1979 state dinner honoring Deng Xiaoping, the first vice premier of the People's Republic of China. It was Carter's gracious recognition of Nixon's groundbreaking role in opening US-China relations. Nixon accepted and attended.

Carter also seemed more conscious of the symbolic importance of former presidents. Certainly he was impressed by the stellar transition that the man he defeated, Gerald Ford, had ensured for him.

The Fords leaving Washington, the first time the exit of a former President became part of inaugural news coverage.

Carter approved an addition to the inaugural ceremony that finally gave more ceremonial due to the outgoing President.

As part of the "official" inaugural events, following the swearing-in ceremony, Jerry and Betty Ford proceeded down the steps of the Capitol through a military honor guard, where they left the premises by helicopter and took a flight over Washington before heading to the airport where they boarded a plane for their retirement life in California.

Neither of the two former Republican presidents, Nixon and Ford, were invited by Ronald Reagan to either of his inaugurals in 1981 and 1985.

This might be reckoned in the context of the party's politics at the time. Nixon was only beginning to be divested of his *persona non grata* status.

Nine months after his first inaugural, Reagan hosts Nixon, Ford and Carter at the White House they left to represent him at Sadat's funeral.

Bad feelings between Ford and Reagan lingered, stemming to the latter's challenge to the former when, as the incumbent President, he sought the 1976 nomination, Ford found some blame for his loss of the general election to Reagan's passive support of his candidacy after the former California governor was defeated for the nomination.

Nine months after his 1981 inaugural, however, Reagan welcomed all three living ex-Presidents to the White House for a reception before they went together as a delegation to Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's funeral.

The Reagans accept Jimmy Carter's congratulations at the swearing-in podium.

Instead of taking a chopper to leave the Capitol after the Reagan swearing-in ceremony, the Carters left by motorcade for Andrews Air Force base. Before their plane took them home to Georgia, Reagan had ordered that a 21-gun salute and the playing of the National Anthem for his predecessor. Carter went home briefly, before boarding a plane to Germany, where the new President had asked him to go to welcome the American hostages held by Iran, who had been freed at the stroke of noon.

In any event, for his two inaugurals Reagan scored *two* and *one*.

A year after Bush's inaugural, the four Republican Presidents came together for the 1990 Nixon Library dedication.

More difficult to explain was why Nixon and Ford did not attend George Bush's 1989 Inaugural. Certainly they happily gathered together twice in California shortly thereafter, along with Carter at the 1990 Nixon Library dedication and, with Carter, the following year for the Reagan Library dedication.

By that time, Nixon had established a distinguished record as an elder statesman and Ford avidly shared the new president's moderate Republicanism.

The outgoing President and First Lady Reagan boarding a chopper to leave the capital; it was a relatively new part of the inaugural customs begun only in 1977.

Both Nixon and Ford had been instrumental in Bush's political rise by appointing him to prestigious posts at the United Nations, the embassy in China and the CIA. Reagan did attend, and the Bushes accompanied the Reagans down the steps and out of Washington.

Thus, the inaugural fraternity remained at *two*.

For the Reagans, the Bushes resumed the custom introduced in 1977 by Jimmy Carter; this time, they accompanied the outgoing President and First Lady down the steps of the East Portico to an awaiting helicopter and their departure from Washington. It then became the custom.

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter at Clinton's 1993 inaugural.

At Clinton's first inaugural, in 1993, only one of the four living former presidents attended, Jimmy Carter, as well as outgoing George Bush. Nixon, Ford and Reagan did not.

At Clinton's 1997 second inaugural, Jimmy Carter was in South America, and thus no former presidents attended.

So while there were an increasing number of former Presidents living longer into the administrations of their successors, the score remained low for inaugural attendance. Clinton: *three, one*.

Former President kissing outgoing First Lady Clinton at the 2001 W. Bush inaugural.

Everything seemed to align better for multiple Presidents to attend with the dawn of the 21st century.

Former President and First Lady Bush greet outgoing President Clinton at the 2001 W. Bush inaugural.

Naturally, former President George Bush and former First Lady Barbara Bush were present for the inauguration of their son, George W. Bush in 2001, as were outgoing President and First Lady, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and former President and First Lady Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.

Incoming Secretary of States Colin Powell greets former President and First Lady Carter at the 2001 W. Bush inaugural.

Former President Reagan, then entering the final stages of Alzheimer's, was obviously unable to attend. He died two years later.

Former President Ford, who had taken ill months earlier at the Republican Convention in Philadelphia, also did not attend.

That still brought W.'s first inaugural up to a new record of *four*, upping the standing score of Kennedy's three at his 1961 inaugural.

Barbara Bush greets former Presidents and First Ladies Carter and Clinton at the 2005 inaugural of her son.

Gerald Ford was too frail to attend the second George W. Bush inauguration in 2005, but former President and Mrs. Carter came again, as of course did former President George Bush and former First Lady Barbara Bush.

Whether he came to escort his wife or in his capacity as a former President, Bill Clinton also appeared along with then-U.S. Senator and former First Lady Hillary Clinton.

With three former Presidents in attendance, the 2005 Bush Inaugural held the record number up to that time, with a fraternity at *four*.

Outgoing Bush, incoming Obama.

Then came the apex.

At the 2009 inauguration of the first African-American president, Barack Obama, for the first time in history every living former President was in attendance at the swearing-in ceremony.

The Carters, Bushes and Clintons seated together at the 2009 Obama inauguration.

This included Jimmy Carter, George Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Also in attendance were their wives Rosalynn Carter, Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton (who had been named as the new administration's secretary of state) and Laura Bush.

Incoming President and First Lady Obama escort their outgoing peers George W and Laura Bush to their waiting helicopter, 2009.

The 2009 Obama Inauguration became the new record, a total of *five* presidents.

At the most recent such event, Obama's 2013 second inaugural, neither of the former Bush presidents attended, the elder having just left the hospital after a long stay, and his son citing that as also the reason he didn't wish to leave home and come to Washington.

The Clintons greet the Carters at the 2015 inauguration, the second Obama one.

Bill and Hillary Clinton and Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter did attend, bringing the number back down to *three*.

This year's inauguration, including the incoming president-elect, along with the outgoing Obama, and former presidents Carter, Clinton and W. Bush, the total will be five.

It is the highest number, but it will still have to stand as the equal tie to that record set by President Barack Obama's first inauguration, in 2009.

For a new president fixated on always garnering the biggest number, whatever the commodity may be, there's no changing the reality of historical fact.

Here, finally is a visual parade of all the Presidents with each of their successors, "*Presidents Together: The Unbroken Visual Link, President to President*," from 1797 to just last Thursday when then the video was completed: