

APPENDIX F

Subj: Library Question - Answer [Question #201161]

Date: 11/13/03 5:16:01 AM Pacific Standard Time

From: ndlpcoll@loc.gov

Reply-to: questionpoint@oclc.org

To: firstamendmist@cs.com

Received from Internet: click here for more information

Hello Michael Newdow,

[Question]:

Question History:

Patron: Chat Session Transcript with Michael Newdow

Librarian 1: Hello. This is a Library of Congress reference librarian. How may I help you today?

Patron: Hello.

I'm trying to which presidents have not added "so help me God" to their inaugural oaths. Can you help? I would like to be able to provide a citation, along with the information.

Thank you.

Patron: Sorry - my computer has problems and sometimes doesn't pick up all the characters. The qstion was:

I'm trying to find out which presidents have not added "so help me God" to their inaugural oaths. Can you help? I would like to be able to provide a citation, along with the information. Thank you.

Librarian 1: Thanks your your question. One of the Library's American Memory collections includes the inaugural addresses of all American presidents. Let me check this site for you to see if it includes this information.

Librarian 1: The home page for this site is:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pihome.html>

Patron: I looked and couldn't find the information there.

Librarian 1: I'm looking at the section "Precendts and Notable Events":

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pinotable.html>

Librarian 1: On this page it indicates:

Librarian 1: Theodore Roosevelt: The only President not sworn in on a Bible. Mr. Ansley Wilcox, at whose home Roosevelt took the oath of office, wrote in 1903, "According to my best recollection no Bible was used, but President Roosevelt was sworn in with uplifted hand." (The Presidents and Their Wives, p. 3)

Librarian 1: This isn't definitive though, and I will probably need to check a print resource for you to locate a definitive answer for your question.

Librarian 1: Is it okay if I get back to you through email after I have checked a couple of our ready references sources to locate the answer?

Librarian 1: A title such as "The world almanac of presidential facts" should have this information for you, and I can check it after chat hours.

Patron: The Roosevelt reference actually doesn't say whether or not he said, "so help me God."

Sure - getting back to me will be fine. Thank you for your assistance!

Librarian 1: Our chat period ends at 4pm today.

Librarian 1: You're welcome, I'll be in touch with you soon.

Patron: Roger.

Librarian 1: Take care, and have a good day.

Librarian 1: Thank you again for your question.

According to the book "Presidential Inaugurations" by Paul F. Boller, Jr., John Quincy Adams and Franklin Roosevelt are the only two presidents not to say the words "so help me, God" at the end of the oath of office.

Here is an excerpt from Boller's book, pages 131-32:

"George Washington said "So help me, God" after taking the oath in 1789, and kissed the Bible, too, and most of his successors followed his example...For some reason, Franklin Roosevelt omitted the utterance at his first inauguration in 1933, perhaps because he was eager to get to the address outlining his approval to the economic crisis facing the country, but in 1937 he did as Washington and the other presidents (except for John Quincy Adams) had done at the end of the oath."

Also, from page 129 of Boller's book:

"John Quincy Adams was the only president not to use a Bible; he swore his allegiance to the Constitution with his hand on a book containing the laws of the United States."

(Source: Presidential inaugurations / Paul F. Boller, Jr. Edition Information: 1st ed.
Published/Created: New York : Harcourt, c2001)

Additional information concerning presidential inaugurations and the oath of office can be found on the American Memory collection "I Do Solemnly Swear" at <
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pihome.html> >

We hope this information answers your question. If you have further questions, please let us know and we'll be glad to provide additional assistance.

Sincerely,

The Digital Reference Team
Library of Congress
pca

To check the status or the history of your library question(s), go to:

<http://questionpoint.org/crs/servlet/org.oclc.ask.PatronDirect?&language=1&email=firstamendmist@cs.com&qid=201161>

Please take a moment to fill out a survey at:

<http://questionpoint.org/crs/servlet/org.oclc.ask.PatronSurveyForm?&language=1&type=ask&qid=201161>

Thank you for using the online resources of the Library of Congress. If you wish to send another question please use one of the following forms:

For American Memory Questions use the form at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-memory.html>.

For questions relating to the Learning Page please use the question form found at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-learning.html>.

For questions relating to virtual programs and services use the form at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-digital.html>

For questions for other Library divisions please return to the Ask A Librarian page at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib>.

Your question will be assigned to a digital reference specialist and you should receive a response within five business days. If, after 5 business days you have not received a response from us, please go to the acknowledgement email that you will receive and reply to it. This will allow reference staff to determine the status of your question and respond to you.