Coolidge Club Blast 12

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News from the Notch

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Bringing History to Life in Barre

Last Thursday I had the pleasure of taking a trip up to Barre, Vermont to visit the Vermont Historical Society's excellent library and research facility. **The Vermont Historical Society** is a repository of the Coolidge Family Papers. In the bowels of their beautiful nineteenth century building one will find the most exciting collection of correspondence, financial records, newspaper clippings, and other assorted treasures from the Coolidge clan, dating all the way back to John Coolidge, the first Coolidge to call Plymouth Notch home. I went to the Society to conduct research for a forthcoming article about the visit of three "vagabonds" (Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, and

Thomas Edison) to the Notch, but in the process of researching I found a few items that would warm the heart any Coolidge fan.

Since the visit of the “vagabonds” took place in the summer of 1924 I decided to investigate letters sent from President Coolidge to his father, the Colonel, and vice versa, to see if any of them made mention of the visit. Alas, I could not find any that did. However, I was able to find a number of other letters that elicited paroxysms of elation within me.

One letter I found, dated March 4, 1919, was written to President Coolidge by his younger son Calvin, Jr., to inform the President about the goings-on at his school, including a massive flood that had come through Northampton. Calvin, Jr. also anticipated a trip to visit his grandfather in Vermont that summer, noting “I have to help him in his haying.” Another letter, dated March 6, 1919, was sent by the President’s older son John to update his father on his educational progress and provide him with a copy of his school marks. The postscript to this letter reads “Please sign my report card and send it right back and try not to loose [sic] it.”

Sadly, not all of the letters I stumbled upon were as lighthearted and uplifting as these. I also found the letter, dated July 4, 1924, that President Coolidge sent to the Colonel to inform him that Calvin, Jr. had contracted blood poisoning from a blister he acquired while playing tennis at the White House. Sadly, Calvin, Jr. died just a few days later from that dreadful malady. I honestly got a bit emotional as I held the letter in my hands, thinking about what the Colonel must have been thinking as he read about his grandson’s bleak prognosis. He had already seen so much premature death in his life, his first wife, his daughter. I can’t imagine how he must have felt at the prospect of losing one of his two cherished grandsons.

I love history because of pieces like these. Archival research is hardly a dry and boring exercise. To the contrary, the preservation of the letters and effects of historical figures opens a window into the minds, perspectives, and worlds of persons long gone, allowing us to bridge the gap of time and acquaint ourselves intimately with those who came before us. Visit the Vermont Historical Society’s website to learn more about the treasures they hold! Any member of the public can visit the Vermont History Center and explore the rich primary source materials they hold from the Coolidge family.

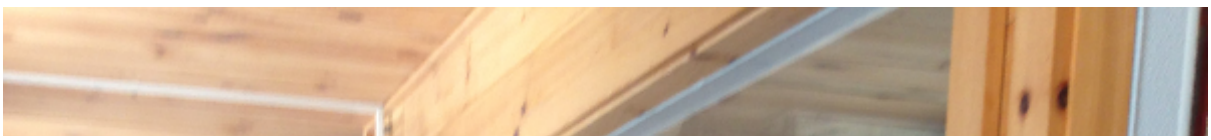
--Rushad Thomas
Program and Editorial Associate

Bringing Coolidge to a New Generation

The Coolidge Foundation and the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site to welcome 4th grade students from Rutland Intermediate School to the Notch this week. These visits were arranged by Diane Kemble, our stellar Education Director. The students were led by our wonderful volunteer docents (and Executive Director Matt Denhart and Program Associate Rushad Thomas) as they explored the temporary and permanent exhibits in the museum, Ms. Cilley's store, the Summer White House, the Birthplace, the Homestead, the Barn, the Church, the Schoolhouse, and the Cheese Factory. We were all impressed by their knowledge of President Coolidge and their excitement while visiting the Notch!

The students from Mrs. Silva's class also donated a maple tree mural that now sits in the maple-sugaring corner of the Plymouth Notch Schoolhouse.

Do you have a school group, a church group, or some other organization that would like to organize a trip to the Notch? Please email our Education Director, Diane Kemble, to arrange a visit!



Students from Rutland Intermediate School observe the cheese making process at the Plymouth Artisan Cheese Factory.

Coolidge Presidential Economic Debate

This summer students from the **Debate Institutes at Dartmouth**, DDI, will be coming to Plymouth Notch on **July 8, July 10 and August 1** to tour the Historic Site, learn about Coolidge and compete in debate. In all, some 225 students from more than 116 high schools, plus China, will attend DDI and debate at the Notch.

This is an expansion of last year's successful debate tournament hosted at the Notch in partnership with the DDI and the Bush Presidential Center. The Bush Center produced a video of last summer's debate tournament, available below. In the video you will see some of the key partners who make this project possible: **Roberto Salinas-Leon**, our international economics instructor, **Nicole Serrano**, director of the Debate Institutes at Dartmouth (learn more about Nicole below), as well as many of our debate judges including **David Pietrusza, Gaurav Tiwari, and Amb. Robert Dieter**. We hope you'll join us for this exciting program this summer. If you'd like to participate as a debate judge on any of the days **please email** events@calvin-coolidge.org **to sign up.**

Watch the 2013 Video Here

Coolidge Foundation Home School Debate Camp

This summer we are pleased to launch our first annual Homeschool Debate Camp. Interested homeschool families are invited to learn more about this exciting opportunity and sign-up. All the details, including the link to sign-up, are included in our program flier, below.

Join us in idyllic Plymouth Notch, Vermont for the first annual Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation Homeschool Debate Camp. Plymouth Notch is the birthplace and childhood home of America's thirtieth president. It is here that Calvin Coolidge took the Oath of Office in 1923 in a ceremony administered by his father, a notary public.

This unique historical setting is an ideal place for homeschool debaters to come for top-quality debate instruction and an opportunity to win college scholarship prize money.

- Special presentations by **Amity Shlaes**, **Matthew Denhart** and **Rushad Thomas** of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation and **Roberto Salinas-Léon**, president of the Mexico Business Forum.
- **Greg Rehmke** of Economic Thinking and experienced NCFCA alumni will lead sessions for beginning and advanced students in policy, Lincoln-Douglas and extemporaneous formats.
- Students will learn how American history and economic principles can give them an edge debating their own annual topic.
- On Friday, August 1, homeschool campers will be invited to compete alongside high school debaters from the Debate Institutes of Dartmouth summer camp on an impromptu topic, with prizes in the form of college scholarship money for the winners.
- Campers will be lodged at the recently renovated Cortina Inn and Resort. **Parents are needed to Chaperone.**
- Camp begins at **11AM on July 30** at the Coolidge Foundation. The Cost is **$150,** which includes lodging, all meals, and materials. Registration Deadline: **July 11, 2014.**
- For more information please email events@calvin-coolidge.org.

REGISTER TODAY AT
https://coolidgefoundationdebatecamp.homeschooldebate.net
(802) 672-3389 • www.CoolidgeFoundation.org

Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth

The Calvin

The Coolidge Foundation has established the **Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth**, a writing prize named after President Coolidge and Calvin, Jr. Writers aged 19 years and younger currently living in the state of Vermont are eligible to compete for the **first-place prize of $1,500 and the runner-up prize of $500**.

This year's Calvin Prize, the second annual, asks Vermont students to think about what factors will influence their decision to remain in Vermont or move elsewhere when the time comes. Furthermore, students are instructed to use Coolidge's *Autobiography* and other sources to address the issues they face and compare and contrast their own situation and decision-making process with that faced by Calvin Coolidge in his years as a Vermont youth. Learn more about the 2014 Calvin Prize by clicking on this link.

Chapter Four Has Arrived!

Be sure to check out our audio recording of Chapter 4 of *The Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge* over on our YouTube Channel! In Chapter 4 President Coolidge discusses his road to Washington, D.C. The President outlines how his prominence as Governor of Massachusetts led the Republican Party to select him as its vice presidential nominee in 1920. He also describes his experience of the vice presidential office. Enjoy! Please enjoy and share!

Remember we will be having a big group reading of the *Autobiography* on July 4 in Plymouth Notch. Email us at **Events@calvin-coolidge.org** to sign-up to read!

Coolidge Foundation Updates

Coolidge needs your mind, wisdom and voice this summer! We have a very full calendar of events for summer 2014, and there are many opportunities for Coolidge Club members to get involved. Please join us **July 4 to read from the *Autobiography***. Please also come to the Notch on **July 8**, **July 10**, and **August 1 to judge our high school debaters.** Also join us **August 2** to celebrate the inauguration of President Coolidge with the Foundation's annual meeting, a reenactment of the 1923 inauguration, and a presentation by author Reeve Lindbergh. **Let us know if you can help by emailing** events@calvin-coolidge.org.

Here's a comprehensive list of date reminders for your calendar

- **June 21-22: Vermont History Expo** – This year's expo takes place at the **Tunbridge (Vt.) Fairgrounds**. Come see the Coolidge Foundation's exhibit, prepared by Diane Kemble.
- **July 4: Celebration at Plymouth Notch.** Join us for the traditional march to the cemetery, readings and wreath-laying at the gravesite, and a group reading of the Coolidge *Autobiography* in the Union Christian Church. **To sign up to read from the *Autobiography*,** click here**. Have Questions? Email** events@calvin-coolidge.org**.**
- **July 8: Presidential high school economic debate at Plymouth Notch.** To judge, email events@calvin-coolidge.org.
- **July 10: Presidential high school economic debate at Plymouth Notch.** To judge, email events@calvin-coolidge.org.
- **August 1**: **Presidential high school economic debate at Plymouth Notch.** To judge, email events@calvin-coolidge.org.
- **August 2:** Coolidge Foundation's **Annual Meeting** and Plymouth Old Home Day with speaker **Reeve Lindbergh**. We will also hold a **reenactment** of Coolidge's 1923 inauguration as President. Actor **Jim Cooke** will be on hand for this

1923 inauguration as President. Actor **Jim Cooke** will be on hand for this.

- **August 2: Annual "Under the Tent" Summer Gala at Plymouth Notch.** Tickets required. Ticket info coming soon.
- **August 11: Naturalization Ceremony at Plymouth Notch.** Ceremony begins at 1:00 p.m. Open to the public.

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