

The Real
Calvin Coolidge

A First-Hand Story of His Life

Told by People
Who Knew Him Best

And Edited with Comment by

Grace
Coolidge

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GRACE AND CALVIN COOLIDGE

The Real Calvin Coolidge

My mother and her son-in-law did not always see eye to eye. Both were accustomed to having their own way, which sometimes led to a test of authority.

The first instance of this occurred when the date of our marriage was under consideration. My mother maintained that I should resign from teaching and spend a year at home previous to the event. Mr. Coolidge took the position that we were both old enough to know our own minds, that he was able to support a wife, and that there was no reason for delay. In their conversations the wedding date was advanced until Mother took her stand at the following November, her son-in-law-to-be at October. Eventually he won in the draw, and poor Mother was bested.

I think she never wholly forgave him, but he proved himself so considerate and dependable that she had to admit that it might have been worse.

The wedding was a very quiet affair with not more than fifteen relatives and friends of the contracting parties gathered in the little parlor. The groom's father and stepmother, his Aunt Sarah Pollard and her husband, and Dr. McCormick, general manager for the groom, who "stood up" with us, were the only guests who came from out of town.

Dr. McCormick neglected to send a carriage for the minister who officiated. He was the Reverend Edward Hungerford, retired, and had been selected because at the time our church was without a pastor. A bare minute before the hour set for the ceremony he drove up to the house in much elegance behind his own spanking pair of horses.

Among our simple wedding gifts was one cherished above all others—a counterpane knitted by Mr. Coolidge's mother during the days of her long invalidism. This went with us in the bottom of my small steamer trunk on our wedding journey to Montreal.

We had planned to be away two weeks, but at the end of one we had seen everything there was to see, had attended all the theatres

we could find, and I was not averse to falling in with Mr. Coolidge's suggestion that we cut our visit short. He made the amusing explanation that he was in a hurry to get back to Northampton in order to show off his prize. I knew better! It was his first political campaign which drew him. Perhaps it was a judgment on him that he lost the election, further mention of which will be made later.

While we were looking for a house in which to set up housekeeping, we lived for three weeks at the Norwood Hotel. It was about to close its doors, and has since been cut in two. The end in which our room was located was moved to the corner, and converted into stores on the first floor, with living apartments above.

A large part of our domestic supplies was purchased from the stock of this hotel, so that for several years our sheets and pillowcases, our table linen and plated silverware, bore the mark "Norwood Hotel."

The process of my domestication was undertaken almost immediately after our return to Northampton. The first lesson was in hosiery darning. Sitting by a window one afternoon watching for my husband's return from the office, in accordance with the procedure commonly accepted as becoming a young bride, I saw him coming down the street carrying an odd little russet-colored bag. It must have been in the family for many years; it was antique in design and gave evidence of the wear and tear of time and usage.

Arrived indoors, my husband released all the little gadgets on the sides, and the bag revealed its contents. It was crammed full of men's hose, all in need of repair. I counted them—fifty-two pairs!

I was told that there were more where they came from. I applied myself to the task in hand. It kept me out of mischief for some time.

When I inquired if their wearer had married me to get his stockings darned, he replied quite seriously,

"No, but I find it mighty handy."

And now it is with more than ordinary pleasure that we come to the reminiscences of one of my husband's good friends, Judge Henry P. Field of Northampton.

His First Job

By HENRY P. FIELD

Judge of the Probate Court and Former Mayor of Northampton

When I happen to hear advice to the beginner in these difficult days as to how he may fit himself into the economic scheme and get his first job, I think of a young man who didn't utter a word when he applied for a place in my law office!

It was in September, 1895. One day a young fellow named Hardy, whom I knew at Amherst, walked into the law offices of Hammond and Field literally towing behind him a young man with red hair and a very bashful manner.

"Here's a classmate of mine," Hardy said. "His name is Coolidge. He wants to come in and study."

As an Amherst man I tried to be helpful, naturally, and after the usual inquiries I said that the newcomer would be welcome. It was not until the two had left that I realized Hardy had done all the talking, and the young applicant none whatever.

He appeared again at the office a few days later, and a desk was assigned to him. Even in a busy organization where a new law student can not make many ripples, Coolidge's unobtrusiveness was conspicuous enough to be marked. He had been there five or six weeks when one morning I read an announcement in *The Springfield Republican* that "J. C. Coolidge" had been awarded a \$150 gold medal for the best essay in a competition open to the seniors in all the colleges of the United States on the "Principles Fought for in the American Revolution."

I went over to his desk and held out the newspaper. If a court reporter were copying testimony, my questions and his answers would have been something like this:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Q. Is that you? | A. Yes. |
| Q. You got that medal? | A. Yes (<i>opening a desk drawer and pulling out a big gold medal</i>). |
| Q. How long have you had it? | A. About six weeks. |
| Q. You've had it all that time? | A. Yes. |
| Q. Why didn't you tell us? | A. I dunno. |
| Q. Did you tell your father? | A. No. (<i>Pause</i>) <i>Will you lock it up in your safe-deposit box for me?</i> |



MRS. CALVIN COOLIDGE

"It was Calvin Coolidge who taught her to round the heel in knitting a sock."

So I took it from him, more convinced than ever that we had added the Sphinx to our staff. Years later I learned that he hadn't told his father because he wanted him to make the pleasant discovery for himself in the newspapers.

Calvin Coolidge loved companions, but he didn't know how to make himself companionable. He used to send me books, cigarettes, his best catch of fish, all kinds of gifts; but at no time, either before or after sending them, would he make the slightest mention of them. He had no single characteristic of the politician. The people found him out for themselves. They thought him honest, straightforward, wise. And he was.

Dwight Morrow once expressed my own feeling that Mr. Coolidge knew no one intimately. Even after we had been associated for many years, professionally and politically, I've known hours together with him when he didn't speak a word.

I remember particularly one time while he was Governor when he took me in his car from the State House in Boston miles into the country, leaving behind a large group of deeply concerned politicians. The legislature had just passed a law reducing about a hundred state commissions to twenty. It was a serious situation, and the Governor's new appointments—more than one hundred in number—were awaited with the gravest anxiety. When we two drove off together, the one assumption at the State House was that he wished to consult with me concerning the personnel of the new commissions.

Well, we rode out through Cambridge to Watertown, where we turned into an old country lane and drew up at a long-forgotten little cemetery. He led me to two crumbling brown headstones that bore the weathered names of John and Mary Coolidge. They had migrated from the old world with the Puritans in 1630 and settled here in what was then a wilderness. A century and a half later another Coolidge pioneer crossed the mountains to the frontier of Plymouth, Vermont—a far cry in distance and in time from the Plymouths of England and Massachusetts. Two centuries and a half after the *Mayflower* sailed, President Coolidge was born at this third Plymouth on the birthday of his native land, July 4th.

Now he stood at the feet of his forefathers, lost in contemplation. He was Governor of the great Commonwealth that these Coolidges had helped to found. His duties did not sit lightly upon him.

Finally he turned to me and said simply, "Those are my first

ancestors in this country." Nothing more then nor all the way back. Not a word about the new commissions, which went to the very heart of government in the Commonwealth.

After our return, I made a point of avoiding the anxious politicians at the State House. How could I tell them that the Governor had not discussed their personal fortunes? How could I say that perhaps he was thinking of a bigger responsibility to the land of his birth as he stood in silence before those little headstones?

Mrs. Coolidge comments:

In Calvin Coolidge's senior year at Amherst College, he was faced with the problem which has been common to seniors since colleges first opened their doors to students. After college, what?

Among the letters written as a student to his father there is this one:

"I have not decided what I shall do next year, shall probably go into the store or go to law school at Boston or New York. That is about as far as I can get and I think you will have to decide which I shall do. I do not see as I have much of any preference now but may have later. I expect to sell out the present in terms of the future and am not in any hurry to get rich. I should like to live where I could be of some use to the world and not simply where I should get a few dollars together. It is not in what I shall get but what I can give that I shall look to for satisfaction."

Thirty-five years later he wrote in his *Autobiography*: "After my course was done I went home to do a summer's work on the farm, which was to be my last. I had decided to enter the law and expected to attend a law school, but one of my classmates wrote me late in the summer that there was an opportunity to go into the office of Hammond and Field at Northampton, so I applied to them and was accepted. After I had been there a few days a most courteous letter came from the Honorable William P. Dillingham requesting me to call on him at Montpelier and indicating he would take me into his office. He recalled the circumstance when I found him in the Senate after I became Vice President. But I had already reverted to Massachusetts, where my family had lived for one hundred and fifty years before their advent into Vermont. Had his letter reached me sooner probably it would have changed the whole course of my life."

How To Escape A Lecture

By WILL ROGERS

Humorist

Mr. Coolidge had more subtle humor than almost any public man I ever met. I have often said I would like to have hidden in his desk somewhere and just heard the little sly "digs" that he pulled on various people that never even got 'em at all.

I bet he wasted more humor on folks than almost anybody. You see most fellows notify you that they are about to pull one, or it's done with a story—"Did I ever tell you the one about the farmer at the election?" Mr. Coolidge never did that, his were pulled with not even a change of inflection, you got it, or you dident, and it dident make any difference to him.

He never did it publically, because he told me one time that it was fatal to show humor in public office, it reacted against you. How he was able to withhold it publically is more than I know, for he was a man that very quickly could detect the sham and insincerity and "hooley," but he just had to sit there and keep a straight face and think it to himself.

One of the best and "fastest" ones he pulled on me (and he pulled many). I was to lecture in Washington on one of my periodical tours (before reforming). I dropped in and wanted him to come to my little show that night, I explained to him that there was nothing to it, only me talking for two or three hours, but that I had a very fine quartet that sang. Quick as a flash without a trace of a smile, he says,

"Yes, I like singing."

Now it would have been a shame if I had muffed that one. Now just imagine how many he must have pulled on old boring politicians that went right over their heads, for they are so used to having somebody give 'em warning when one is coming. He had that real old New England humor, the "no effort" and "no demonstration" kind.

He was a great fellow. I thought much of Mr. Coolidge, told a thousand little jokes and anecdotes about him, but they were all ones that brought out some little humanness in his make-up. They were all jokes on qualities which the people admired in a man. I like all

public men, but I especially liked Mr. Coolidge, and Mrs. Coolidge was just about my "Public Female Favorite No. 1."

Mrs. Coolidge comments:

In the spring of 1927 Mr. Rogers toured in Europe and wrote for one our of weekly publications a series of articles under the general title "Letters from a Self-Appointed Ambassador to His President."

It was President Coolidge's custom to invite returning Ambassadors to make him a visit at the White House. When he learned that Mr. Rogers had sailed for home, he instructed his secretary to send an invitation to him to be a White House guest. Upon receipt of it Mr. Rogers sent a wire to the secretary worded in somewhat this fashion:

"Have received an invitation purporting to come from the President. Am taking train for Washington stopping off in Philadelphia. If I am asleep and dreaming, wake me there."

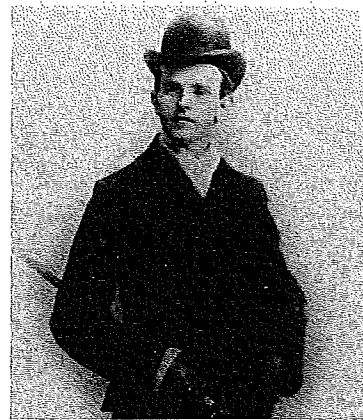
In reply he received a message confirming the invitation, and he arrived that evening after we had gone in to dinner. His arrival having been announced, he was bidden to join us, and he entered the dining room with a twinkle in his eye, looking like a small boy who has just swallowed a forbidden piece of candy.

As we were rising from the table he turned to me, and in an aside which all might hear he said, "I wish you would tell me if the President is going to run again."

In the same confidential tone I replied, "You find out if you can, and let me know."



As a Northampton Lawyer



As an Amherst Student

"I Want a Raise!"

By ERNESTINE CADY PERRY

Formerly Secretary in the Offices of Coolidge and Hemenway

"Calvin Coolidge—Law Office."

The simple gold lettering can still be seen on one of the second-floor windows of the Masonic Building in Northampton's lower Main Street. It was here in two simple rooms that he maintained his law office. Here his partner, Ralph W. Hemenway, still carries on the practice. You can stand at the window and look across the street at the railway station.

My first impression of Mr. Coolidge is of a tall, spare, dignified man in a high silk hat, striped gray trousers, and black morning coat, with its very correct tails sedately bobbing as he alights unhurriedly from the train that has brought him from the State House in Boston. He was then Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

He felt keenly that public officials should maintain the dignity of office. To him it represented the public trust. His dignity was not a pose. He was always orderly. I never saw him in need of a shave, and I never saw his hair untidy. I never saw his shoes in need of a shine.

Only once did I see him lose his dignity.

One very warm day I was waiting for his return to his office where I attended to his secretarial work when he was in Northampton. The telephone rang, and his voice came over the wire on a long-distance call.

"Will you meet my usual train at the Northampton station and get my coat and hat out of the next-to-the-last seat on the first coach? I got off to send a telegram. The train left. Meet the train that comes in an hour and a half later. I'll be on it. Bring my hat and coat with you to the station."

He sounded disgruntled. Picture Calvin Coolidge, Lieutenant-Governor, unfrocked and unhatted, hiding from curious eyes at the railroad station while he awaited the arrival of that next train! Upon reaching Northampton he had only to walk the length of the platform and cross the street to his office, but he would not attempt it hatless.

There was an old swivel chair that stood in front of his old roll-top desk. When he had cleaned his desk of all correspondence by dictating

to me, and cleared his office of all callers, he would sit for hours with his right elbow on the arm of his chair, his head resting in his hand, and his eyes closed. At first I thought he slept as the result of fatiguing tussles with politicians at the State House. But not so.

Upon one occasion it was one of his delightful chuckles that made me aware that he was not always asleep when he looked asleep. I was the innocent cause. Having satisfied myself that he was drowsing, I softly opened a lower drawer in my desk and drew out some coral-pink yarn and needles. With plenty of ambition, but little sense and no knowledge, I had decided to make a sweater in my first attempt to knit. The needles seemed as big and clumsy as canes. I fairly hit myself in the face with them. The heads of the needles caught in my hair, and I had a hard time getting them untangled. Mr. Coolidge tried to quiet his chuckles, but they broke loose in a long ripple that actually shook him.

"I guess you haven't learned how to knit yet," he said, brushing the tears of mirth from the crinkly corners around his eyes. "I'll have to invite Mrs. Coolidge down to show you how to knit."

It was while he was seemingly napping that he composed many of his speeches. After writing them in longhand he would give them to me for typing. Sometimes he would ask me to read parts of them aloud. He always seemed conscious that he was better as a writer than as a speaker, and I am sure he did not enjoy delivering a speech.

Sitting at the roll-top desk signing his distinctive signature to a long list of monthly checks settling his debts in full, he typified for me the Man Who Lived Within His Income. Never did a month come and go with a bill left unpaid. The same day he signed the checks for his monthly bills, he sent me forth to deliver them on foot. In this manner he saved postage. In a sense he paid me for the extra wear and tear on my shoe leather. He told me I could go home whenever I finished delivering the checks. I always saw to it that the delivery was speedy.

Nearly every one in Massachusetts, it seemed, was riding in an automobile. You didn't know, and they didn't care, whether the automobile belonged to them or to the dealer or banker. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Commonwealth did not own an automobile. He traveled back and forth to Boston on the train, and he never traveled Pullman. He took the trolley from his Northampton office to his home on Massasoit Street, and came down on the trolley in the morning.

Mrs. Coolidge used to come into the office now and then like a ray of sunlight. One day she looked especially stunning in a rose-colored "picture" hat which framed her expressive features. When we told her how much we liked her new hat, her eyes sparkled with fun, and she told us this story:

Mr. Coolidge had an engagement in Springfield, and she went down with him to look around in the stores. In a window they saw this hat, and he insisted that they should enter the store and try it on. Feeling sure that the price of the hat would place it beyond their reach, she followed him inside. With the hat upon her head she inquired,

"How much is it?"

The answer came, "Nineteen dollars and ninety-eight cents," and to her surprise Mr. Coolidge said,

"We'll take it, and she will wear it."

He drew a twenty-dollar bill from his pocket and received his two cents in change, holding them in his hand as walked up Main Street. Occasionally he would glance slyly at the pennies in his hand, then at the hat on Mrs. Coolidge's head. But not a single comment did he make then or thereafter about its cost.

Calvin Coolidge knew a lot about how to run a household economically. In spite of the tremendous burden of detail he carried in his public offices, he never let anything get by.

One day he swung around in his chair at the office and said suddenly, "Do you put up fruits and vegetables?"

"I don't know a thing about canning, and no one at our house does," I replied.

He looked a bit disapproving, and then said: "Well I suppose you are too young to know. We always put up a lot of fruit and vegetables at home in Plymouth, and at my grandmother's, too. I can't get our housekeeper to do any. I think she should."

It took courage to ask Mr. Coolidge a favor. I believe he fostered this impregnability and knew its political worth. It always seemed to me that it was one of his greatest assets. It must have saved him much difficulty in his political progress to the Presidency. I think he used to test the sincerity and unselfishness of one's interest by making it hard to broach a request. When I had determined to ask Mr. Coolidge for a raise, I had much sympathy for the men who came and went without asking him the favor they sought. It was my first job, and I was making all of seven dollars a week! I felt that after

working faithfully for six months I should be rewarded with a small raise, and I decided, modestly enough, to ask for an increase to nine dollars. This seems an incredibly small salary now, even in these days of salary cuts, but I was probably getting all I was worth at the time. It salves my vanity to recall that one of Mr. Coolidge's friends offered me thirty-five dollars a week as his secretary when I left the Coolidge office.

Once determined to launch the request for the raise, I devoted my spare time for a week to the preparation of a speech filled with my reasons. At last came the day of Mr. Coolidge's return from Boston. I could not get to it that day. The next day came and nearly went, and my usually glib tongue grew heavy and stiff. In anguish I gazed out of the window at the clock on the street as the hands pointed to an hour beyond my usual time for departure. At last Mr. Coolidge whirled around in his chair and gave me one of his rare smiles that twinkled in the corners of his eyes.

"Did you want to ask me something?" he inquired in a kindly tone. I suppose he was getting anxious to go home, too.

I clung to the desk for support, shut my eyes, and shouted—at least I thought I shouted; it may have been that I only whispered—"I want a raise!" Completely forgotten was the fine speech I had so laboriously prepared.

"Do you think you deserve it?" he questioned severely.

"Yes," I blurted between clenched teeth.

"I think you do, too, but I hope you will save some of it. Save some, no matter how large or how small your salary may be," he admonished gravely.



Coolidge's Desk

As Governor, Calvin Coolidge spent less time at his roll-top desk. As Vice-President and President he left it to take up his residence in Washington. But he remembered his old friends—in a strictly non-political, friendly way.

From the White House he sent autographed photographs to each of my two little daughters. Apparently they had heard Calvin Coolidge's virtues and moderation in all things extolled more than I realized. Jane, at the age of five, once startled me by remarking,

"Would it be better if I had Calvin Coolidge for a daddy instead of my own daddy?"

Today we have our memories. We can look at the old roll-top desk donated to the Coolidge collection in the Forbes Library at Northampton. We can fill the pigeonholes of the old desk with our rich memories of Calvin Coolidge, and think of the creed he stood for: faith, simplicity, thrift, and diligence. He exemplified them in his own life. And to him they were the cornerstones of national prosperity.

Mrs. Coolidge comments:

Mrs. Perry gives us a real peep through the window with the gold lettering, "Calvin Coolidge—Law Office." It is said that no man is a hero to his valet, and the same might apply to a man and his secretary. I have always said that I aimed to be a good safety valve; it seems to me that an efficient secretary should have the same aim. I have scant patience with the man of whom his wife says, "He never gave me a cross word in his life." It seems to me that he must be a feckless creature. If a man amounts to much in this world, he must encounter many and varied annoyances whose number mounts as his effectiveness increases. Inevitably comes the point beyond which human endurance breaks down, and an explosion is bound to follow.

It is possible that when the worth of Mrs. Perry had advanced from seven dollars per week to thirty-five, she had learned to be a good safety valve.

Her story of the hat reminds me of another hat which Mr. Coolidge selected for me in a unique way. He was Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts at the time, and it was his practice to come home Friday night, returning to Boston on an early train Monday morning. On a Monday morning in June I was surprised, upon passing through the living room, to see him seated in the Morris chair with one of my hats upside down between his knees. With a piece of string he

was taking the inside measurement of the crown. I asked no questions, but watched him curiously as with infinite care he tied a large knot at the place which indicated the size of the hat. After winding the string around two fingers, he placed it inside a small notebook which he always carried in a waistcoat pocket.

The following Friday the boys and I were to meet him at Bellows Falls and continue on to Plymouth for our annual summer visit. As our bags were disposed in convenient places I noticed a large, gayly striped hat box on top of his own suitcase. This he gave into the care of his older son when we alighted from the train at Ludlow, the railway station nearest Plymouth. After the twelve-mile drive and the greetings of arrival, he opened the box and uncovered a large leghorn hat faced with dark-blue taffeta silk. A single pink rose was artistically arranged upon the brim. At once I knew the purpose of the string with a knot in it.

I must have presented an odd appearance in the little village that summer, for I seldom was permitted to go out of the house without the hat upon my head. I have no doubt the neighbors thought I was "high-hatting" them.



President and Prince Autograph A Bucket

By HENRY FORD

Industrialist; Democratic Candidate for the Senate, 1918

In company with Mr. Edison I visited Mr. Coolidge one summer day at his Vermont farm. I had always heard he was a taciturn man, but found him a man of most friendly conversation, free in the expression of his own opinions and interested in hearing the opinions of others.

It was not long after our introduction that he had us out in the little cheese factory behind the farmhouse, where we were eating the cheese curd which we got by using whittled pieces of shingles as spoons. It was good American cheese.

After we returned to the house Mr. Coolidge spoke about an old sap bucket which his grandfather had used, and offered it to me for our collection at Dearborn. Of course I was very happy to have such a gift and asked him to autograph the bucket.

"Why, yes," he said, "we'll all autograph it."

So Mrs. Coolidge and Mr. Coolidge's father and the President and Mr. Edison and the rest of the party autographed the sap bucket.

Naturally we greatly prized that old wooden sap pail and took great pains to see that it arrived at Dearborn safely. It arrived in time for the addition of another signature to the list. It happened that the Prince of Wales was a luncheon guest at our house, and we told him the story of the bucket. He intimated that he would like to be on the bucket, too, and quickly added his signature.

We have what we call the "Coolidge Collection" at Dearborn. We have his cradle, the first baby carriage in which he rode, the "settle" from the old Coolidge kitchen, and various household objects connected with his boyhood. He was one of the most American men I have ever known.

Mrs. Coolidge comments:

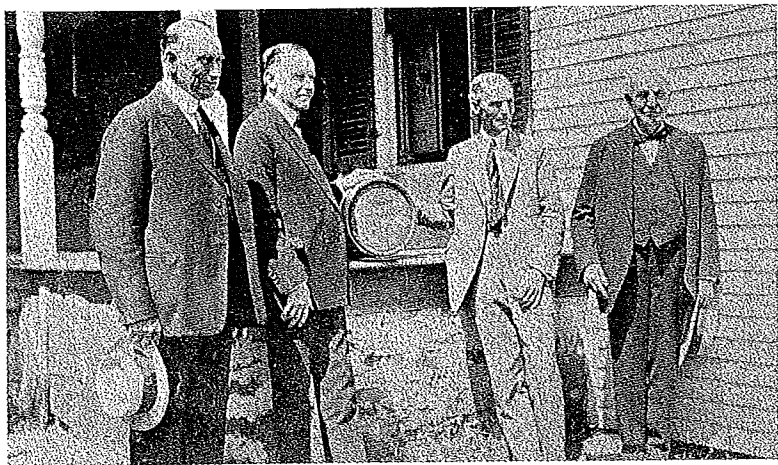
We passed our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary at the Wayside Inn at Sudbury, Massachusetts, arriving on Saturday afternoon on our way to Boston to attend the convention of the American Legion. Mr. Coolidge had written for reservations, but we were not aware that it was not customary to receive guests over Sunday until we had been comfortably established in Mr. and Mrs. Ford's suite of

rooms beyond the kitchen in the part of the inn which had been originally the woodsheds.

The hostess had received us most cordially, and after the Saturday-night dinner guests had departed, we were privileged to roam about the delightful old inn at our pleasure. Swinging from an iron arm attached to a side wall in the barroom, then used as an office, we found the wooden sap bucket made by Mr. Coolidge's great-great grandfather which he had given to Mr. Ford in Plymouth. The initials "I.C." are burned into the bottom, "I" being the old form of "J."

On Sunday morning we attended services in Wayland, the adjoining town, and returned to find dinner being prepared for us in the old kitchen of the inn. A beef roast was turning on the spit in front of the huge fireplace; vegetables in iron pots hanging from the crane were steaming off delicious odors; there were mince, apple, and pumpkin pies in the brick oven, and hoe cake in the ashes. Presently we were sitting down in front of the fire at a tavern table set with old pewter, steel knives, and three-tined forks. In the center was a wooden bowl filled with rosy-red apples polished to a gleaming brilliancy. A kitchen maid in a print dress of the period carved the roast on a wooden block at a table in a near-by corner.

It was not difficult to turn back the pages of the years and fancy that we were living in a bygone day when the Wayside Inn was new and its rooms were peopled with others who, like ourselves, were celebrating an occasion which was a landmark in their lives.



Col. John Coolidge, Pres. Coolidge, Henry Ford and Thomas Edison at Plymouth

His Only Defeat

By JOHN J. KENNEDY

Insurance Agent, former President Common Council, Northampton

There was no glory in my election to the minor post of School Committeeman over the man who was to rise to the Presidency. Some one has calculated that Calvin Coolidge ran for office nineteen times and won by comfortable or big majorities in every case, with not a single pre-election pledge to help him.

In the face of that record our little contest in 1905 does not mean a thing. My majority was only about 94 votes in a total of more than 1700 ballots. There is not much to crow over in so small a margin, especially as it was Mr. Coolidge's very first appearance as a candidate of any kind.

During the campaign I met him on the street one day, and I said to him as you'd say jokingly to a good friend,

"Calvin, I think I've got you beaten."

"Well," he answered, "either way, they'll have a good man."

At the end of my three-year term, Calvin was again offered the nomination, but he declined it and very liberally recommended that on the strength of my record I should be indorsed by both parties. And that was done.

Mrs. Coolidge comments:

The year that we were married I wanted to go home for Christmas and placed the matter before my husband at an early date. He made his consent dependent upon the event of his election to the school board. I have a strong suspicion that in his own mind at the time he was assured of defeat.

Later, in discussing the results of the election with a neighbor who normally voted the straight Republican ticket, my husband learned that he had voted for Mr. Kennedy, giving as his reason his conviction that members of the school committee should have children in the public schools.

My husband's reply to that was, "Might give me time."

Football "Medicine"

By JAMES F. COUPAL, M.D.

Former White House Physician, Colonel, Medical Corps.

Any one who can not revert to boyhood in a big job is lost. That's just what Calvin Coolidge did. He was always kidding.

It was part of my work to report to the President daily at 6:30 p.m. I didn't dare to be a second late. One of his little jokes was to shout:

"Don't let him in. Lock the door. It's 6:31."

Once after a football game on a cold day I told him I was a little concerned and that I wanted him to have some medicine. I described the medicine as pneumonia antitoxin. In contained pepsin with some red coloring matter, but mostly it consisted of 95 percent alcohol—a good two ounces of it. He drank it off with no expression whatever on his face, but as he put down the glass, he said with a nasal twang,

"You're smart, ain'tcha!"

During the early part of his administration quantities of food were disappearing mysteriously from the White House kitchens. These shortages were stopped presently, but not before the President had heard of them. About that time he complained to me concerning the food.

"Too many stews," he said. "But then I suppose you can't put a stew in your pocket and carry it home like a pork chop."

It was a pleasure to watch the President's mind at work. It was like a slide rule—and just as accurate. He hated unfairness, and his sense of justice made him think he was perfectly appointed by God. If you had a mean thought about your rival, Calvin Coolidge would want to make you suffer for it.

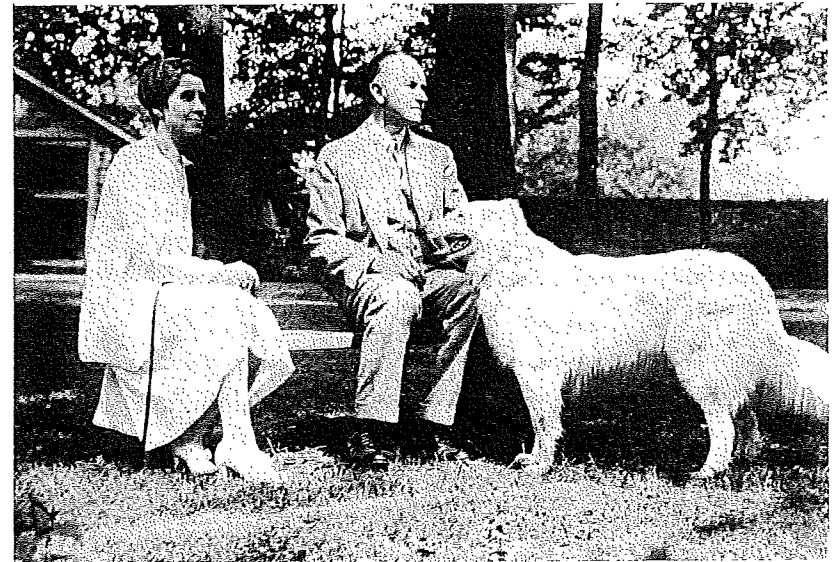
Mrs. Coolidge comments:

When planning to move from Boston to Washington, Mr. Coolidge thought it expedient to make some provision for a medical adviser. He asked Colonel Blanchard, who had attended him in Boston, to recommend some one whom he knew. He suggested Major James F. Coupal, who was then on duty at the Museum of Medicine connected with the Smithsonian Institute. He attended the Vice-President when his services were required and was made physician to the

President upon the resignation of General Sawyer, who had been President Harding's medical attendant.

Dr. Coupal's recent death caused deep regret among his many friends. His joviality and warmheartedness were widely known.

I must say in his defense that he was seldom that second late to which he referred. His visits were always welcomed by the President, and I think his twice-daily calls were a source of relaxation to him, as the Major had an infectious laugh which he was ever ready to let loose at my husband's little jokes. Mr. Coolidge had confidence in the Major's concoctions and perhaps was not averse to the "pneumonia antitoxin," even though he recognized its high alcoholic content. The President had his retaliation when he asked Captain Boone to come in to spray his throat, "because," he said to Major Coupal, "if you treated my throat, you'd be just as likely to spray my eye!"



Grace and Calvin Coolidge relaxing at their home.

The President Shouldn't Know Too Much

By BRUCE BARTON
Author and Advertising Executive

Four Coolidge characteristics and an incident to illustrate each one:

1. *He had read history. Current problems presented themselves to his mind in light reflected from the past.*

The winter of 1919-20 was a time of inflated prices, following the war; high rents and high living costs were producing unrest; all sorts of social panaceas were being promulgated. As we sat in his office in the State House in Boston one morning, he reached into a drawer of his desk and pulled out a faded old document and handed it over. It was an Act passed by the Selectmen of Belchertown, Massachusetts, in the inflationary period that followed the Revolutionary War. The Selectmen, disturbed by the protests of their constituents, decided to fix by law the prices at which the farmers from the surrounding country must sell their peas, beans, meat and potatoes in the Belchertown market. Heavy penalties were prescribed for any farmer who charged more. Of course the edict was completely futile.

Said Coolidge, "Isn't it a strange thing that in every period of social unrest men have the notion that they can pass a law and suspend the operations of economic law?"

2. *He had an innate and reliable wisdom about human nature.*

After the Boston police strike the labor leaders held a conference with him in the Governor's office. It was a closed meeting; no reports were published in the press. I happened to be with him a few days later, and I said,

"When those labor leaders are in your office and the door is locked, and they know there is no dictaphone in the room and that you can be trusted, what kind of fellows are they anyway?"

He answered: "You must never forget that a labor leader is first of all a *political* leader. He has about twenty fellows gunning for his job, and each of the twenty is promising to do more and get more for the members than he has been able to do or get. So he usually has to *talk* a lot more radically than he actually *feels*."

3. *He had a profound sense of the dignity of the office of President of the United States.*

We were alone one day in the camp in the White Mountains where he and Mrs. Coolidge were spending the summer. He took me down in a car to his summer office, a little wooden building several miles from the camp.

As we started off I said, "I notice that even up here in the woods you always are served first at the table, always leave a room first, always get into the automobile first."

"Yes," he answered. "Those things seem unimportant to you and me, but they *are* important. They are little things that have to do with the ceremony of the Presidency. As far as I am concerned I propose, if I can, to pass that office on to my successor without the loss of one iota of its peculiar dignity."

4. *He had a very definite philosophy of the functions and technique of the Presidency.*

That philosophy sounds strangely antique in these days when everything and everybody insist on an answer from the White House; but he never deviated from it.

Two years after his return to private life I spent a week-end with him at Northampton. We were sitting in his little library when he reached for the telephone to speak to his office downtown. When he was finished, I said:

"I can't remember that I ever saw you use the telephone before. I was trying to think while you were talking, and I can't recall whether you even had a telephone in your office at the White House." "No," he said, "I didn't. There was a phone in a booth in the outside hall that I could have used, but I never did."

He smoked awhile in silence, and then said: "The President should not talk on the telephone. In the first place, you can't be sure it is private, and, besides, it isn't in keeping with the dignity of the office."

Another silence, then: "The President shouldn't do too much. And he shouldn't *know* too much."

I leaned forward. "What do you mean by that?" I asked. "That the President shouldn't *know* too much."

"The President can't resign," he answered. "If a member of the Cabinet makes a mistake and destroys his standing with the country, he can get out, or the President can ask him to get out. But if he has involved the President in the mistake, the President has to stay there

to the end of his term, and to that extent the people's faith in their Government has been diminished.

"So I constantly said to my Cabinet: 'There are many things you gentlemen must not tell me. If you blunder, you can leave, or I can invite you to leave. But if you draw me into all your departmental decisions and something goes wrong, I must stay here. And by involving me you have lowered the faith of the people in their Government.'"

Mrs. Coolidge comments:

Mr. and Mrs. Barton came to our summer camp in the Adirondacks the last day we were there. Packing was going on, and everything was generally upset. Our guests were to return with us on the train to Washington and were told that an early rising would be required in order that the final packing might be done. We had a little fun at their expense when their sheets were the last articles to be stowed away in one of the large hampers which had been kept open to receive them.

The President's private car was turned into a newspaper workshop, for Mr. Barton's mission was to write an interview with the President. Mrs. Barton and I sat unnoticed in a corner of the drawing room, knitting and conversing in low tones as typewriters clicked in one of the compartments. Mr. Barton gravitated between the typists and the President, talking, writing and placing finished sheets before the President for his final O.K. I believe that the resulting article held the record for speed from mouth to press.