

# The Real Calvin Coolidge

*An Annual Publication for The Members of  
The Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc.*

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Articles, of original research and personal remembrances concerning the lives of Calvin Coolidge and his family, are solicited by the Foundation. All articles submitted to the Editor for consideration must be typewritten. The right to edit materials to conform to the established policies and format of the publication is reserved by the editorial staff.

Opinions stated and conclusions drawn in The Real Calvin Coolidge are those of the contributing authors, which may or may not necessarily reflect those of The Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc.

This edition of The Real Calvin Coolidge is the sixth in a continuing series published annually by the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc. These booklets, which are given as free yearly gifts to members of the Foundation, are also available for purchase.

Write to The Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 97, Plymouth, VT 05056 for information on how to order additional copies of this and earlier editions of The Real Calvin Coolidge, and how to become a member of the Foundation.



(White House Collection)  
*Watercolor of Grace Goodhue Coolidge by Howard Chandler Christy recently acquired by The White House. It is a study from the larger oil painting by the same artist which hangs in the China Room. It is reproduced here for the first time.*

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This year, 1988, has unofficially been declared *Grace Goodhue Coolidge Year*, with the dedication of a room in her honor at the University of Vermont, along with the reprinting of the biography, Grace Coolidge and Her Era by Ishbel Ross, in June, and concluding with the keynote address dealing with Grace Coolidge at the August annual meeting of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation by member and trustee Dr. Clifford A. Pease, Jr. Therefore, it seemed only appropriate that the lead story in this issue deal with "The Birthplace of Grace Goodhue Coolidge" by Dr. Pease.

We follow with "Yankees in the White House" by Irving Bell. Mr. Bell compares and contrasts Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire and Calvin Coolidge of Vermont in this interesting and informative article.

Todd W. Van Beck, Chairman of the Department of Mortuary Science at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, New York, gives us a glimpse of his soon to be published book about presidential deaths and funerals with the article "The Death and Funeral of Calvin Coolidge." Those who find the study of the Presidency a fascinating aspect of American History should look with eager anticipation to the publication of Mr. Van Beck's completed work.

"When Silent Cal Used Cocaine," originally published in the May 1987 issue of Yankee magazine, is reprinted here by the gracious permission of Mr. and Mrs. Milton F. Heller, Jr. This firsthand account gives us all an opportunity to increase our storehouse of Coolidge stories and lore.

The Book Review section concerns four recent publications: Calvin Coolidge and His Family: An Annotated Bibliography by Clifford A. Pease, Jr.; A Biography in Picture Postcards by J. R. Greene; First Ladies by Betty Boyd Caroli; and Presidential Wives: An Anecdotal History by Paul F. Boller, Jr.

To members and friends of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation and this publication, I extend deep gratitude for articles and book reviews which made this issue possible. I believe you will agree with me that this issue, along with the other five issues of The Real Calvin Coolidge, will have an honored place on your parlor bookshelf. Enjoy!

John A. Waterhouse, Editor

## Birthplace of Grace Goodhue Coolidge

By CLIFFORD A. PEASE, JR., MD

Andrew Issachar Goodhue and his wife Lemira Barrett Goodhue, the parents of Grace Anna Goodhue Coolidge, moved to Burlington, Vermont, from Hancock, New Hampshire, in 1870. They both came from old New England families that had settled in New Hampshire and they were married there April 17, 1870, shortly before going to Vermont. Mr. Goodhue had been trained as a mechanical engineer and had accepted a position with the Kilburn and Gates Mills in Burlington, which at that time manufactured cottage furniture, but later became the Burlington Cotton Mills. In 1887, Mr. Goodhue was appointed steamboat inspector for the Champlain Transportation Company and acquired the title Captain Goodhue.

According to her autobiography, Grace's parents "set up housekeeping in the far side of a double brick house belonging to the owner of the mill and adjacent to it on lower St. Paul St." It was there Grace Anna Goodhue was born on January 3, 1879. This is substantiated by her birth certificate, on record in the Burlington city clerk's office, which lists the place of birth as "Shelburne Street near Gates Mill".

In an attempt to identify the exact house, the contradiction between St. Paul St. and Shelburne St. is explained by street name changes that occurred in the 1870's. St. Paul St. was extended southward and that part of Shelburne St. where the Goodhues lived became St. Paul St. Burlington city directories of the period list the Goodhues as living "on St. Paul St. at foot of Spruce St." As the building was owned by the Kilburn and Gates Mill, the Goodhues lived in company housing and his name does not appear on the tax roles as owner. The residence shown in figure 1 is a photograph of 315-317 St. Paul Street taken in 1987 and matches Mrs. Coolidge's description exactly. The building had been

occupied by the Lane Press Accounting Offices for many years until they moved in late 1987.

According to Mrs. Coolidge's autobiography, when she was "between two and three years of age my father built a house on lower Maple Street". The 1881-1883 Burlington city directories show this house at 123 Maple Street as the home of A. J. Goodhue. (See figure 2.) The family lived here until they moved up the street when Grace was in college. The 123 Maple Street house has been noted erroneously, at least twice, as being Grace Coolidge's birthplace. Ishbel Ross, in her book Grace Coolidge and Her Era, referred "to the house on Maple Street in which she was born" and, in regard to 312 Maple Street, stated "it as only a few doors away from the smaller house in which she was born." Esther Hamilton, in Vermont Is the State I Love, referred to the "families first home--at 123 Maple Street where Grace was born and spent her early years."

Grace Coolidge was raised in this house, and she attended schools in the area, until she graduated from Burlington High School in 1897. Grace stayed out of school for a year because of her health, but entered the University of Vermont in the fall of 1898.

In the meantime, her father purchased a building lot from Mr. Charles Plympton Smith, a prominent Burlington business man and banker. There in 1899, he built a new home at 312 Maple Street. (See figure 3.) He did this because he wanted his daughter raised "on the hill", where the wealthier Burlingtonians lived, as compared to lower Maple which was rapidly becoming commercial. The Goodhues lived in the house until Mr. Goodhue's death in April, 1923.

It was here that Grace entertained her college friends and where many of the early founding meetings of the Vermont Beta Chapter of the Pi Beta Phi fraternity were held. It was here that she married Calvin Coolidge, in a small family wedding in the parlor on October 4, 1905.

Mrs. Coolidge returned numerous times to her Burlington home while her parents were still living,

but after the death of her father in 1923 the house was sold, then Mrs. Goodhue spent much of her time in Northampton until she died October 24, 1929.

Mrs. Coolidge visited Burlington after the house was sold, but the Coolidges made Plymouth Notch their vacation retreat. There they stayed in the Coolidge homestead, which President Coolidge inherited on his father's death in 1926. In 1931, they built a large addition, with modern amenities such as indoor plumbing which the homestead previously lacked. When the homestead was given to the state in 1956 to become an historic site, the new addition was moved to a nearby hill where it was added on to and is still the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. John Coolidge.

Grace Coolidge died at her home, *Road Forks*, in Northampton, on July 8, 1957, at the age of 78.



(figure 1) Birthplace of Grace Goodhue at 315-317 St. Paul Street, Burlington, Vermont



(figure 2) Home of Grace Goodhue at 123 Maple Street, Burlington, Vermont. She lived here from 1881 to 1899.



(figure 3) Home of Grace Goodhue (1899-1902) at 312 Maple Street, Burlington, Vermont. She lived in this house while she attended the University of Vermont and it was here that she married Calvin Coolidge on October 4, 1905.

## Yankees in the White House

By IRVING BELL

Vermont and New Hampshire have both sent one of their native sons to the White House, with the lives of the two men having remarkable parallels though separated by almost a century.

Calvin Coolidge and Franklin Pierce were sons of leaders in their communities, each holding both town and state offices. The future Presidents were born in small villages, handled farm chores until after reaching their majority, and always maintained a deep love for their birthplaces, even though destiny called them far afield.

While the Vermonter was graduated from Amherst and the New Hampshire man from Bowdoin, the colleges were similar in size and setting. Each ended his college career with a high scholastic rating and delivered a class oration. After receiving a bachelor's degree, both graduates went to Northampton, Massachusetts, to study law.

They had a high sense of duty, to their fathers, to their profession, and to their country. Neither felt it beneath him to work on the farm from time to time; rather they considered it a privilege. Through their diligence in the study and practice of law, they became the foremost attorneys in their area. Such ability won for them a succession of local and state offices, while at the same time their fathers were likewise active politically. Coolidge and Pierce served the Legislatures of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, respectively, with each being elected as presiding officer. Despite popularity in their own states, neither was considered Presidential timber until shortly before their nomination.

Coolidge was elected governor of Massachusetts, while Pierce was proffered the candidacy in New Hampshire but declined. Each man, at some period in his life, planned to concentrate on his law career. Each served in the U.S. Senate, but Pierce resigned to handle his more lucrative practice.

The most striking parallel between these two men was in the tragic and sudden loss of a son, with its immense effect on conduct of the Presidential office. Calvin Jr. died of blood poisoning at 16; Benjamin was 11 when killed in a railroad accident.

President Coolidge wrote, "In his suffering he was asking me to make him well. I could not. When he went, the power and the glory of the Presidency went with him. The ways of Providence are often beyond our understanding. I do not know why such a price was exacted for occupying the White House."

In his inaugural address, President Pierce began: "No heart but my own can know the personal regret and bitter sorrow over which I have been borne to a position so suitable for others rather than desirable for myself."

Coolidge and Pierce died before reaching old age, in a year when the opposition party was in power and their own political philosophy was in disfavor. Both were inflexible in their views and would have considered themselves turncoats had they departed from their strict interpretation of good government.

Other similarities in the lives of these two men could be cited--their frugality, their reverence for the past, their reluctance to accept change, and their respect for military tradition. (Coolidge wished he had enlisted, while Pierce managed to escape family ties to sign as a private and to win appointment as brigadier general.)

Both of these northern New England Presidents might not have made it without the political example of their fathers. However, the determination to forge ahead against all odds (while it may have been an inherited trait or the result of early discipline) was self-nurtured by both and cannot be credited to a parent's insistence or a wife's encouragement.

Within a very few years of their deaths, the two Presidents were remembered in an image distorted by calamitous events--the Depression, in one case, and Civil War, in the other. The high esteem in which they had been held by the general public fell vic-

tim to a clamor for new goals and concepts.

Federal planning, anathema to Pierce, became government policy in Coolidge's final year. Pierce lived long enough to see the country come out of a war which he thought could have been prevented. The economy, and the government's handling of it, took a sharp turn when the two leaders passed on.

Every President claims to be patriotic, but in the case of Coolidge and Pierce, we have leaders who saw the founding fathers in heroic proportions. Speeches of both affirm the fact: that they were guided by the nation's heritage from Washington and Jefferson in many decisions during their Presidential terms.

## The Death and Funeral of Calvin Coolidge

By TODD W. VAN BECK

*"Here my dead lie pillowed on  
the loving breast of our  
everlasting hills."*

Death and funerals are mirrors of life styles and life attitudes. The death and funeral of Calvin Coolidge is no exception; by examining the events leading up to his death and the ceremonies of his funeral, we are able to see reflected Calvin Coolidge's unique and special philosophy of life.

Calvin Coolidge was an admirable man. People, especially the common people, trusted and respected him. He gave the country balance. Coolidge was a simple, straightforward and exceedingly bright man. He neither wanted nor sought the fanfares or the brass bands of life. For Calvin Coolidge life was being competent, dependable, and devoted. His was a unique life, and in his death and funeral we observe a ritual which reflects Coolidge's modesty and simplicity.

In the funeral of Calvin Coolidge, one sees balance between fame and dignity. "Do something, but don't overdo it," is the Coolidge philosophy which is finally and forever played out at his funeral. Calvin Coolidge was a quiet man, and his departure from this life was consistent with the quiet manner in which he lived.

Saturday, January 7, 1933. Five years have passed since Calvin Coolidge stunned the nation with his "I do not choose to run in 1928" announcement. Calvin Coolidge had retired to his home in Northampton, Massachusetts, and Herbert Clark Hoover had taken on the Presidency. But on this cold Saturday, Herbert C. Hoover was not a happy man. The nation was now in the throngs of a Great Depression. In November, Hoover had lost his reelection bid to a euphoric Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and today Hoover was in Northampton to see his predecessor and

political ally buried.

Northampton was cold, overcast and rainy. At 7:45 a.m., on this first Saturday in January, 1933, the funeral coach owned by funeral director Oscar Edwards pulled up in front of the historic Edwards Congregational Church. Six members of the Northampton Police Department arranged themselves on each side of the funeral coach. As Mr. Edwards opened the coach's rear door, Northampton Police Chief, Bartholomew Bresnahan, ordered his officers to attention. A heavy bronze casket was slowly pulled from the coach; and as it appeared, each police officer grabbed a portion of a handle which extended the full length of the casket.

For the police officers, this was a solemn moment. It was a special moment because the casket they were going to carry into the church contained all that was mortal of Calvin Coolidge, 30th President of the United States.

After his Presidency, Calvin Coolidge had returned to Northampton, Massachusetts to resume private life. At the time of his retirement from office, Coolidge was an exceedingly popular President. This popularity did not end in Northampton, the result being that the popular Coolidge could not be the private Coolidge. To resolve the matter, Coolidge and his wife Grace purchased a private home called *The Beeches* which overlooked the Connecticut River. It was here that Calvin Coolidge planned his retirement years.

At *The Beeches*, Coolidge found some respite from the political and social limelight. He was able to relax and did some writing. The man, who during his Presidency had cut taxes three times, signed the hopeful Kellogg-Briand Pact, and who had lost only one political election in his long career was now at home with his beloved wife.

But, as his retirement years passed, and as the political and social crisis of the Great Depression deepened, Coolidge changed. His always fragile health now became increasingly problematic. Five and a half long years in the White House and the extraordinary effort to restore the dignity and

honor of the Presidency after the Harding debacle, had taken its toll on Coolidge.

In 1932, while visiting his ancestral homestead in Plymouth, Vermont, Coolidge had experienced a severe attack of hay fever and asthma. Rumors concerning Coolidge's health had floated around during his Presidency, but now to be sure Coolidge was a sick man. The health crisis left Coolidge in a weakened condition. Even his associates noticed that he had aged greatly.

In the fall of 1932, Coolidge was using a variety of sprays to help him breathe, and hardly a night went by when he did not suffer great distress in respiration. He was suffering from chronic heart failure due to coronary sclerosis.

During the Hoover campaign of 1932, Coolidge promised to make two significant addresses for the incumbent President. The country was in the midst of the Great Depression, and most everyone was blaming President Hoover. Hoover's popularity was at a low ebb, and his chances for reelection were slim. Coolidge, however, had experienced overwhelming popularity as President. Thus, Hoover was correct in counting on the Coolidge support as one of the great strengths in his reelection effort.

The campaign strategy called for Coolidge to make two major addresses, one in New York City and the other in Chicago. Hoover was anxious for the "Coolidge magic," to do its work. However, due to Coolidge's own ill health, the old magic was gone.

Coolidge arrived in New York and delivered the first address. But, he experienced so much difficulty breathing that he feared he would not be able to finish the text. Understandably shaken by the experience, Coolidge advised President Hoover of his weakened physical condition. Ever the gentleman, President Hoover cancelled the Chicago address.

The election of 1932 was a crushing defeat for the entire Republican Party. A jubilant Franklin Delano Roosevelt entered the White House, while a depressed and frustrated Herbert Hoover left The Oval Office to endure twenty years of vilification.

For Calvin Coolidge, who was a natural vote getter, the 1932 election was a great disappointment. Coolidge's health deteriorated further. He experienced chronic indigestion, weight loss, and was continually tired. Coolidge experienced so much trouble breathing when lying down, that he endured night after night of sleeplessness. He would not admit to heart trouble, but persons around him noticed that he took his own pulse often. It was in this state of health that Calvin Coolidge welcomed the New Year, 1933.

Thursday, January 5, 1933. *The Beeches* was covered with ice and a chilly wind blew over the Connecticut River. As was his habit, Coolidge rose at 7:00 a.m. He did not shave immediately, but instead dressed and went downstairs to meet his wife for breakfast. At 8:15 a.m., Coolidge was driven to his downtown office where he examined the newspaper, tended to his general office work, and finished several letters. However, by 10:00 a.m., Coolidge wanted to return home.

When Calvin Coolidge arrived back home, he went inside and discovered Mrs. Coolidge ready to go shopping. Coolidge asked his wife if she wanted the car. "No," Mrs. Coolidge replied, "It's such a nice day I'd rather walk than ride." These were the last words they exchanged.

Harry Ross, Coolidge's private secretary, realized that the ex-President did not feel well and noticed that Coolidge seemed restless. After Mrs. Coolidge left, her husband went to the library, where he worked on a jigsaw puzzle of George Washington. Harry Ross came into the library, and Coolidge spoke with him about matters concerning the homestead at Plymouth. Coolidge then left the library and went to the kitchen for a drink of water.

From this point, Calvin Coolidge went upstairs to his dressing room to shave before his wife returned from shopping. Mrs. Coolidge arrived home around 12:45 p.m. She placed her belongings on a table and went upstairs. There on the dressing room floor she found her husband dead. Calvin Coolidge lay on his back in his shirt sleeves. It looked as if he was



preparing to shave when he was stricken.

Mrs. Coolidge went to the stairway landing and called to Harry Ross, "My husband is dead."

Dr. E. W. Brown was summoned and after his examination concluded that Coolidge had been dead only fifteen minutes when he was found. Dr. Brown set the time of death officially at 12:25 p.m., Thursday, January 5, 1933. The cause of death was a coronary thrombosis due to chronic heart failure. Coolidge's death was quick and painless. There was no post-mortem conducted. Calvin Coolidge had lived 60 years and 185 days.

In Washington, President Hoover was in conference with Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson when he was notified of Coolidge's death. He was shocked and stunned at the unexpected news. President Hoover notified Congress and the nation went into a 30-day mourning period.

John Coolidge, the older son of Calvin and Grace Coolidge, was in Connecticut when the news came from Northampton of his father's death. Shaken, John and his wife Florence left at once to be with Mrs. Coolidge.

Across the airways, newspapers and telegraphs sent the news of Calvin Coolidge's death. The Cincinnati Enquirer ran front page headlines in one inch letters:

COOLIDGE JOINS ILLUSTRIOUS PREDECESSORS;  
SUFFERS HEART ATTACK, AND A NATION MOURNS.

President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote, "I am inexpressibly shocked at the news of Mr. Coolidge's death. The nation suffers a great loss in his sudden and untimely death."

The New York Times wrote, "In a very real sense the nation has lost the leader in whom it most completely trusted."

As the eyes of the world were being focused on Northampton, Massachusetts, a call was made to Oscar Edwards, a Northampton funeral director. Dr. Brown had completed his medical examination; and, amid the news being flashed across the country

about his death, the body of Calvin Coolidge was embalmed, gently placed in his own bed, and made ready for funeral ceremonies.

By the evening of January 5, 1933, the world began to talk, estimate, evaluate, praise and even argue about the life and career of Calvin Coolidge. But at *The Beeches* there was no talking, estimating, or evaluating. This night there was only quiet mourning for the memory of Calvin Coolidge, who now rested from all labors. Tonight Calvin Coolidge lay in silence. All was quiet, all was simple.

But, the stillness and reverent atmosphere that prevailed at *The Beeches* the evening of January 5th was not to be longlasting. The fact was this: A President of the United States had died, and decisions must be made.

The morning of January 6, 1933, brought with it decision time. The first decision made concerning the Coolidge funeral was the rejection of any plan to hold ceremonies in either Washington or Boston. Mrs. Coolidge was crystal clear concerning her wishes: Keep the funeral simple.

Mid-morning on Friday the 6th, funeral director Oscar Edwards brought a solid bronze casket to *The Beeches*. The casket was designed and manufactured by the Boston Burial Case Company and was one of the finest caskets made.

The funeral director dressed Coolidge in formal attire and placed the remains in the casket. As Coolidge lay in death's stillness, one could see a gold ring, which was inlaid with onyx, on his finger. For the remaining part of Friday, Calvin Coolidge would lie in state formally. While the funeral director prepared other funeral arrangements, floral tributes began arriving. The Governor of Massachusetts sent a floral wreath in memory of Coolidge's Governorship of that Commonwealth. The flower shop of Butler and Ullman in Northampton was flooded with orders.

It was decided that the funeral services would be held in the sanctuary of the Edwards Congregational Church (founded by Puritan Clergyman Jonathan Ed-

wards). Stores and banks in Northampton prepared to close on the funeral day. But true to Coolidge's frugality, merchants were told that staying closed all day was optional.

Eleven honorary pall bearers were selected from Coolidge's old friends and associates. Selected were: Frank W. Stearns, a Boston merchant; William F. Whiting, a Holyoke paper manufacturer; Clifford H. Lyman, a Northampton merchant; Walter L. Stevens, a Northampton attorney; Ralph W. Hemenway, Coolidge's law partner and former U.S. Senator; William M. Butler, Coolidge's campaign manager; R. B. Hills, of Northampton; Homer C. Bliss, Mayor of Northampton; Charles F. Andrews, Amherst college Treasurer; and Robert H. Trumbull, former governor of Connecticut. These men would not actively carry the Coolidge casket, but instead would stand in two ranks of honor while the casket passed by.

President and Mrs. Hoover, along with Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, would come by the Presidential Special the morning of the funeral. In addition to the political dignitaries, news reporters from all over the world were converging on Northampton. As inappropriate as it seemed, there was an excitement in Northampton. Hundreds of reporters made long distance calls to their editors, and telegraph operators were overworked. Tomorrow, January 7, 1933, would be an historical day for a President was to be buried. Calvin Coolidge would have been uncomfortable with all this notoriety in death, but the telegraph keys kept on clicking.

One hundred miles to the north, in Vermont, a different atmosphere prevailed. In the tiny hamlet of Plymouth most were in quiet mourning. The Vermont residents had lost not only a beloved President, but a beloved friend and neighbor. To the residents of Plymouth, Calvin Coolidge was one of their own, and they put claim on him.

In the Notch Cemetery at Plymouth, Azro Johnson plotted out a grave space on the Coolidge lot and then began to chip away at the frozen earth with his axe. Azro was the sexton of Plymouth Notch Cemetery, and he was a man who had dug countless

graves. Over the years, Johnson had dug graves for old people, graves for young people, graves for the rich, and graves for the poor. But today it was different. On this cold January day, Azro Johnson and several men were digging a grave for "Cal."

Johnson and the other men shoveled one load of earth after the other--the pile near the opening grew larger. The wind blew and Azro rubbed his hands together to stay warm. Azro worked most of the afternoon; and as the sun disappeared behind the Green Mountains, Azro tossed out the last load of earth. A canvas cover was placed over the grave, and Azro picked up his axe and shovel and went home. "It would be cold again tomorrow," he thought to himself.

The day of Saturday, January 7, 1933, served as the prelude to a significant day in the history of Northampton, Massachusetts, and Plymouth, Vermont. In front of Edwards Congregational Church, Northampton Police Chief Bresnahan and five other officers came to attention. Police officers Edward B. T. John, J. J. Meehan, Cornelius O'Keefe, George Bernier and James V. O'Donnell stood erect in their spotless uniforms. The casket was taken from the funeral coach, carried into the church and positioned in front of the chancel.

Imposing floral tributes were positioned around the casket. Two National Guardsmen, John L. Manning and Francis Ford, were assigned to keep a vigil of honor at the head and foot of Calvin Coolidge's casket. Oscar Edwards came forward and opened the casket. At 8:30 a.m. the doors of the church were opened to allow the community an opportunity to pay their respects to the memory of Calvin Coolidge. The time allotted for homage was brief, and by 9:30 a.m. the church doors were closed. Help sent over from Smith College hurried about to get the sanctuary ready for the formal funeral service.

Twenty-five ushers, the Northampton Police and Fire Departments, as well as Sheriff A. G. Beckman and a number of his deputies were on hand to control the crowd, both inside and outside the church.

At 9:45 a.m., Oscar Edwards closed and sealed the

casket. A final inspection was made; and everything seemed in order. All the floral tributes were positioned; all the necessary pews were reserved and marked. The doors of the church were reopened and the public began to find seats. Most of the general public were asked to sit in the balcony as the nave of the church was reserved for dignitaries and special groups.

It was a bleak day weather-wise, but regardless of the inclement weather, literally hundreds of people began to show up. In a matter of minutes, the church was filled to capacity, and still hundreds more stood in the rain outside. The large crowd was a testimony to the public affection for ex-President Coolidge.

At 10:00 a.m., prior to the funeral service, the President and Mrs. Hoover, along with Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, visited the Coolidge family. The visit was brief, and by 10:15 a.m. the Presidential party had arrived at Edwards Church, escorted by two Northampton motorcycle police. Upon arrival at the church, President Hoover went to the casket of his predecessor and stood a few moments in quiet thought. Hoover then laid a wreath of Japanese Leothe flowers on the casket and took his seat in the second pew.

Outside, the crowd had grown so large that the police were losing control. The original plan had been to divert traffic away from the church; but as the hour of the funeral grew closer, the traffic and crowd became unmanageable.

Calvin Coolidge's son John remembers: "In Northampton the crowd at the church was so large that the traffic came to a standstill, and President Hoover and other dignitaries had difficulty getting into the church. The police could not control it."

The funeral service was scheduled to start at precisely 10:30 a.m. At 10:25 a.m., Mrs. Coolidge and other family members arrived at the church, using the side entrance on State Street. Mrs. Coolidge was dressed in black and wore a widow's veil. Mrs. Coolidge walked directly into the church and took her place. John Coolidge recalls: "My mother

exhibited complete control of her emotions, as did my wife and I." Inside the church it was so dark that the lights had to be turned on.

By this time many notables in government and society had taken seats. Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and her son James, Bernard M. Baruch, Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, Justice Harlan F. Stone, Vice-President Charles Curtis, and Charles Francis Adams. Also present were members of the Bar Association the Grange, Congress, Governors and even the Salvation Army.

Amidst the seating of dignitaries and general of movement, organist Thomas C. Auld, of Holyoke, Massachusetts, began the organ prelude. The prelude consisted of Handel's *Largo* from "*Xerxes*," Chopin's *Funeral March*, and the *Largo* from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.

Because of the crowd and weather, the funeral began late. At 10:40 a.m., the six Northampton Police Officers serving as pall bearers filed to the front of the church. The Edwards Church Quartet, who were to furnish vocal music for the service, took their places next to the flower-banked chancel. The clergyman took his place.

Mrs. Coolidge had requested that the funeral be simple and that no eulogy be read. With this request, Reverend Albert Penner complied. Reverend Penner's remarks were composed of Holy Scripture and prayer. Including musical selections, Calvin Coolidge's funeral lasted twenty minutes.

Prior to the day of the funeral, the press had made much to do about Reverend Penner's youthful appearance. The 31 year old Penner was relatively new to the Edwards Congregational Church and had only conducted three previous funerals in Northampton before the Coolidge service. But as Reverend Penner stood and spoke, all the concerns of the press quickly vanished. It was evident that this young cleric had great capabilities.

To a hushed assembly, Reverend Penner offered the opening Invocation. "Almighty God," Penner began, "Who art our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble, grant us thy light to

shine through the shadows of this hour."

At the close of the Invocation, the Edwards Quartet stood and sang the familiar hymn, "Lead Kindly Light." This hymn had historical significance, for it was the favorite of martyred President William McKinley. The Edwards Quartet was comprised of Miss Gladys Noble, of Springfield, soprano; Mrs. Charles E. Lotreck, of Northampton, contralto; Francis B. Gustin, of North Amherst, bass; with Charles E. Stebbins, Jr., of South Deerfield, as tenor.

When the quartet ended, Reverend Penner read selections from Holy Scripture. Reverend Penner began with Psalms 46: "God is our refuge and our strength," then Psalms 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains," Romans 8: "For as many as are led by the spirit of God these are the Sons of God;" 2 Corinthians 5: "For we know that if the earthly hours of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and ending the formal scripture reading with John 14: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me."

It was the absence of a eulogy and the emphasis on Scripture and prayer which created the sought after effect of dignity and simplicity that Grace Coolidge had requested. The funeral for Calvin Coolidge was a fitting commemoration of his life, and people were touched.

Following the reading of the Holy Scripture, the Edwards Quartet sang "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go." It was 11:00 a.m. when Reverend Penner offered the Benediction. Organ pipes swelled with music, as people began to fidget in their seats.

The ushers escorted Mrs. Coolidge, her son John and other family members out the side door to a waiting car. The plan was for the Coolidge family to make a brief stop at *The Beeches* before making the trip to Plymouth. Inside the church ushers dismissed the remaining congregation, and outside the enormous crowd began to slowly disperse.

Following the funeral services, President and Mrs. Hoover, along with Vice-President Charles Cur-

tis, were escorted to *The Beeches* to visit with Mrs. Coolidge. Hoover wanted to go to Plymouth for the graveside services. After some discussion, Mrs. Coolidge persuaded Hoover that due to weather, time and the lengthy trip it would be better if he returned to Washington. Hoover consented to Mrs. Coolidge, and the Presidential Party left for the train depot.

At the Edwards Congregational Church, funeral director Oscar Edwards and church ushers prepared for the trip to Plymouth. Originally the plan was for a 3:00 p.m. graveside service. Due to the bad weather and inevitable delays, the funeral procession would be late.

After a short rest at her home, Mrs. Coolidge returned to the church to join those who would accompany her and the family to Plymouth. At the state line, the Massachusetts State Trooper escort would be replaced by Vermont State Troopers. The Trooper escorts would prove very valuable on this long and somewhat hazardous trip.

As the twenty car funeral procession for Calvin Coolidge left the church, the weather turned to rain, hail and heavy winds, but along the funeral route farmers, merchants, parents and children stood bare headed in homage to the 30th President of the United States.

At the Plymouth Notch Cemetery, a canvas canopy was erected over the Coolidge grave to protect his widow and family from the elements. Willard D. Cabot, a local funeral director from Woodstock, Vermont, was there to oversee the committal service. Willard D. Cabot was a friend of the Coolidge family and had buried both the President's father and younger son. Six Deputy United States Marshals arrived at the cemetery to serve as pall bearers. They would not have to carry the casket far, because the grave was on the slope of a hill close to the road.

The minutes passed one by one, and the crowd at the cemetery became larger. Everyone stood in the cold. Things were quieter here than in Northampton. There were times that the only sounds to be heard

were the wind blowing and the water running over stones and pebbles in a stream nearby. Everyone was standing quietly looking at the Coolidge lot where five generations of this particular American family were buried.

Azro Johnson stood and waited. He looked up at the Green Mountains and waited for the funeral procession to arrive. Azro knew that Calvin Coolidge was on his way home.

The procession of black cars reached the cemetery road at approximately 4:30 p.m. As the procession stopped in front of the grave, nearly everyone noticed that the sun was setting rapidly. The six U.S. Deputy Marshals carried the heavy casket to the grave site and gently rested it on the lowering device. Some floral tributes were arranged, and the Reverend Penner took his place at the head of the casket. A nod from Willard Cabot to Reverend Penner and the committal services for Calvin Coolidge began.

The graveside service was also to be kept simple. Reverend Penner recited the traditional verses of earth burial and then read a special poem which Mrs. Coolidge requested. It was getting dark as Reverend Penner read:

"Warm summer sun, Shine kindly here.  
Warm southern wind, Blow softly here.  
Green sod above, Lie light, lie light.  
Good night dear heart, Good night, good night."

Then Reverend Penner read the final Benediction, and all was silent. Florence Coolidge came forward and placed a single red rose on her father-in-law's casket. The graveside committal service lasted five minutes.

For several minutes, people from all walks of life simply stood in reverence and respect, each with his or her own private thoughts. The silence was broken with the military sound of a bugle playing taps. This was appropriate, for Calvin Coolidge had been Commander-in-Chief. As the sounding of taps concluded, the last remnants of daylight hov-

ered over the western ridge of the Green Mountains. Just before the light of day ended, the dense cloud cover broke open, allowing a ray of bright sunlight to shine over the gravesite for only a moment, and then it was gone.

It was dark now, and the family and friends of Calvin Coolidge returned to their cars. For many, what lay ahead was a hundred-mile trip back to Northampton. For others, just a short walk back to the farm. But for everyone, the journey, no matter how short or long, would include thoughts of Calvin Coolidge.

As the procession left the wintry setting, the casket was gently lowered into the earth by Willard Cabot. As quiet descended Azro and the other neighbors began filling in the grave. Calvin Coolidge, 30th President of the United States, would now rest forever with his ancestors; and as it is done with all Presidents, history would begin a new chapter in the book about Calvin Coolidge's life and career.



## When "Silent Cal" Used Cocaine

By MILTON F. HELLER, JR.

*Editor's note: The following is an extract from the unpublished memoirs of the late Vice Admiral Joel Thompson Boone, Medical Corps, USN (Ret.), as edited by his son-in-law, Milton F. Heller, Jr. Admiral Boone was the most highly decorated medical officer in the history of the U.S. Navy and served as White House physician for 11 years.*

Of the four presidents whom I served as a physician, Calvin Coolidge is the one whose health habits and views on medicine seemed most unorthodox and fascinating to me. I got to know the Coolidges well while serving as medical officer on the presidential yacht *Mayflower*, assistant White House physician and White House physician. I began this tour of duty while only 33 years of age during the Harding administration and stayed on during the Coolidge and Hoover years and for the first month of Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term.

Soon after President Coolidge was inaugurated following the death of President Harding, I warned him of the long hours of work required of a president and stressed the need for him to exercise regularly. Fortunately he liked to walk, which was his only form of exercise.

At one point a friend expressed his concern over the president's lack of sufficient exercise by purchasing a large mechanical horse for him. The artificial animal looked like a horse in every respect with a bridle, bit in the mouth, reins, and French flat leather saddle with stirrups. Finding a place to locate it posed a problem, but the president finally selected his own bedroom as the only place that he could use it unobserved.

The president enjoyed using the horse and rarely missed a day, but I felt that his procedures were faulty. In the past he had always taken his exercise, followed by an evening bath, and then changed

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his underclothes and dressed in his tuxedo for dinner. Now, however, he insisted on a new sequence: taking a bath; putting on clean underclothes (long-sleeved ones with long drawers even in summer); putting on a semistarched tuxedo shirt; tying his bow tie; putting on tuxedo trousers and jacket; and finally mounting the horse, which he would proceed to ride at a canter or a trot. Controlling the speed of the horse by a lever just in front of the saddle, he would ride until he worked up a real sweat, then dismount, mop off his face, dry his hands, and go to dinner.

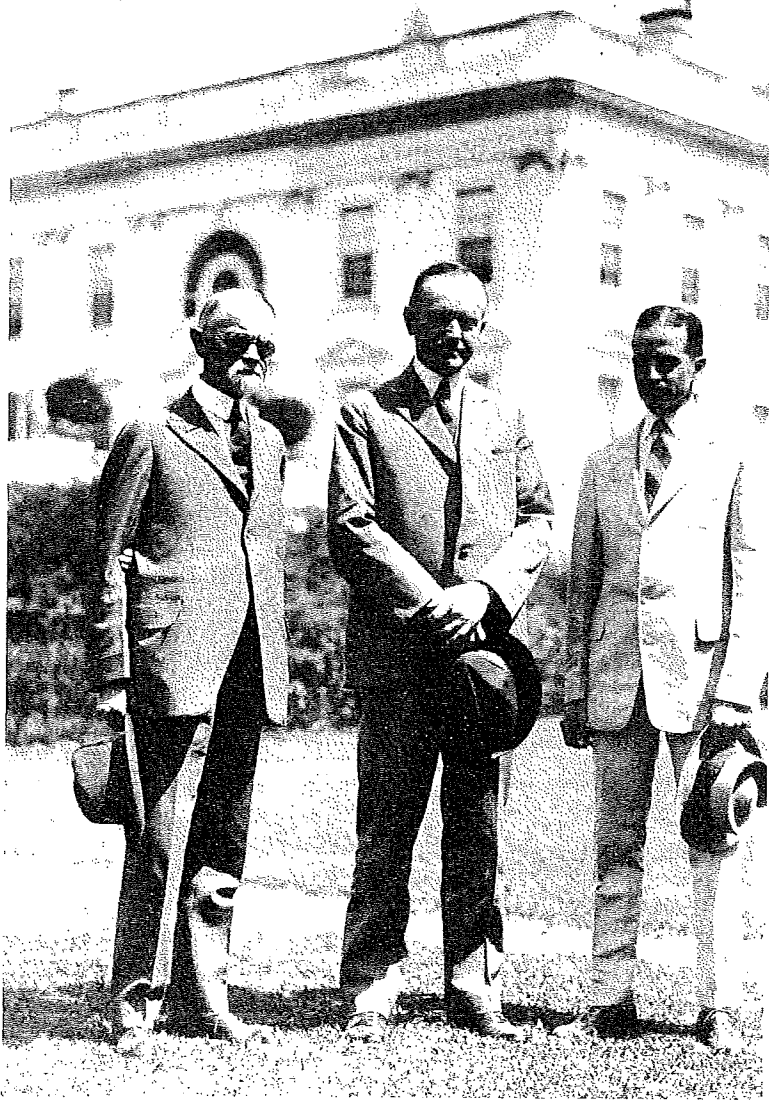
A call for me to treat the president could come at the oddest time. For example, following a concert by Richard Crooks at the White House, the president sent for me and asked me to treat his throat. Then, wearing his undershirt and sitting on the only facility in the bathroom that could be used as a seat, he asked me to apply a corn plaster to one of his toes. In full evening dress, including epaulets and miniature medals, I could not help but be amused as I performed this menial bit of therapy. A sense of humor was a salvation in my professional service.

The president had some strange ideas when it came to prescribing medical treatment for himself. I don't know who ever told him that dropping cocaine in the ear would relieve seasickness, a malady to which he was susceptible. I had never heard of this treatment, and I did not feel that it was efficacious. At the same time I did not believe that it would do any harm. Accordingly, at the president's insistence, I complied with his wishes, feeling that if it helped him mentally, it might quiet his nervous system.

I remember well the time that the president was called upon to review the Atlantic Fleet, comprised of 98 ships: he was so miserable from seasickness, despite my ministrations of cocaine in the ear, that he was unable even to chat with the commander in chief of the fleet, Admiral Charles Hughes. He just wanted the review to end as quickly as possible.

As President Coolidge's old mentor, Frank

Stearns, once said to me, "The president has some 'backwoods' ideas on medicine, will only take medical advice when he sees fit to do so, and rarely sees fit to do so."



Calvin Coolidge is shown with Brigadier General Charles E. Sawyer, Medical Corps, U.S. Army Reserve, (on the President's right), and Lieutenant Commander Joel Thompson Boone, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy.

## Book Reviews

Clifford A. Pease, Jr., Calvin Coolidge and His Family: An Annotated Bibliography (Rutland, Vt.: Academy Books, 1987).

Here is an essential volume for anyone interested in the life and times of the late president. The author disclaims the "times" part of the book, but surely no one can read or write about the 1920s without discussion of the nation's chief executive.

Dr. Pease presents his accounting in three parts: biographies, documents, and "other books on the Coolidge family." On the left-hand side of each two-page spread is a photograph of the President or a scene related to the Coolidge presidency, and this selection of illustrations adds greatly to the appraisals of the Coolidge literature. Those appraisals are themselves frank and open. The author, to use a phrase of the times, minces no words. His acute appraisals--Dr. Pease has an unerring eye for a book's weakness, either mechanically or in a literary sense or in analysis--are sure guides to readers who wonder what are the best books or, perhaps, are looking through the disorganized shelves of secondhand bookstores and espy a title he or she had never heard of, and wonder if the price rather arbitrarily marked on the flyleaf is worth it. Dr. Pease also has checked out the availability of Coolidge books, and orders the list according to (1) in print as a new book, (2) reprint, (3) out of print but available as a used book, and (4) out of print and hard to find.

His conclusions are extremely helpful. The Autobiography he properly credits as prosaic, with occasional anecdotal commentaries. The best book, although published in 1940, was by Claude Fuess, Calvin Coolidge: The Man from Vermont: "It is thorough in content, well written, serious in nature..." A Puritan in Babylon by William Allen White is, of course, the best-known book. White's second book on Coolidge (the first, a compilation of magazine ar-

ticles, was not much) displays the times, which he knew well, but is less interesting, although almost racily written, on its biographical subject. Donald R. McCoy's Calvin Coolidge: The Quiet President, published a generation ago, uses material Fuess did not have access to, and hence offers historical perspective, but lacks the vitality of either Fuess or White. Ishbel Ross's Grace Coolidge and Her Era is a gracious and informed account--and about to be reprinted by the Memorial Foundation (a fact that Dr. Pease was unable to include in his own book, for the decision had not been taken.)

Other notable volumes appraised in this fine accounting are Thomas B. Silver's, Coolidge and the Historians, which corrects offhand errors by present-day historians; Jane and Will Curtis and Frank Lieberman's, Return to These Hills, on the Vermont years; John A. Waterhouse's, Calvin Coolidge Meets Charles Edward Garman, a notable chapter in the President's Amherst education; and the fascinating volumes edited by Edward C. Lathem.

Robert H. Ferrell  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN

J. R. Green, Calvin Coolidge: A Biography in Picture Post Cards (Athol, Mass.: The Transcription Press, 1987), 101 pages, \$9.95.

An interesting and thorough work on the subject of the former President, Calvin Coolidge. The book is 6 1/2"x9" with 101 pages and 80 postcard illustrations. Much time was spent on compiling this excellent biography and cards relating to our 30th President. This unusual biography of Coolidge and his family, and the people and places close to him provides a compact summary of the life of the man.

Included are quotes from his autobiography, written many years earlier, of course.

There are separate essays that view Coolidge in perspective. It summarizes the revival of the interest in him in the 1980's and gives tips on col-

terest in him in the 1980's and gives tips on collecting cards on the subject.

The catalogues will give various prices from \$1 and up. The later views will be the least expensive, and real photos of him will be very collectible. Modern chrome cards of Calvin Coolidge will probably sell for twenty-five or fifty cents. Adding post cards of Calvin Coolidge to a collector's library would be very colorful and informative, because of this 30th President's ways of living and his philosophies on life, and the people he met with and conversed with during his Presidential years. He was a very interesting, quiet, uncomplicated man who liked his own privacy and tried to have it. Coolidge's Presidential years were quiet, uneventful, prosperous, and with very few ripples of discontent. He was a very likable President who did not "make waves" or cause worries.

Fred Switzer, Editor  
The Post Card Digest  
Boston, MA

Betty Boyd Caroli, First Ladies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 398 pp., \$19.95.

Paul F. Boller, Jr., Presidential Wives: An Anecdotal History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 533 pp., \$19.95.

These two books on the wives of the U.S. Presidents complement each other very well because they approach their subject in entirely different ways. Caroli's book looks at the first ladies collectively and takes a comparative look at their individual attributes and their contributions to their husband's tenure. Done in a sequential manner with only a minimal amount of biographic information, the first ladies are grouped with their peers, with broader comparisons coming mainly in the last two chapters on the press and the conclusions on "The Women They Married".

The chapter that includes Grace Coolidge is "The Paradoxical 1920's" and also includes Florence



Harding and Lou Hoover. The Coolidge material is limited and occupies only six pages. Grace Coolidge is pictured very lightly as a free and easy going person who charmed everyone. Always friendly and smiling, she is placed in sharp contrast to the President. One of the picture captions refers to her "wacky ways". She was well accepted socially and was a superb hostess. Mrs. Coolidge wore beautiful clothes, one of the few extravagances the President encouraged. He limited her role to family and social events and she had no influence on the political side. Caroli makes the statement that "having a wife who did not divulge her opinions on any important matter fitted in with his image of the President as a corporate head".

The change from being a small town New England housewife to becoming the wife of the Vice President and then President of the United States was truly a remarkable accomplishment. She not only did it but did it so well she is remembered as one of the most gracious of all first ladies. Every reference the writer has read about Mrs. Coolidge has been complimentary.

The appendices publish results of the 1982 Siena College poll on Presidents and their wives. Grace Coolidge ranked 17th out of 42 first ladies. President Coolidge, 30th of 39 Presidents.

The third in a trilogy about the Presidents, Boller takes the more traditional approach of chronological biographic sketches of the first ladies with interesting anecdotes added as appropriate.

Chapter 28, devoted to Grace Coolidge, totals 16 pages. Boller condenses into a few pages a lot of information on the Coolidges to make one of the best biographical sketches of Grace Coolidge to date. Most of the Coolidge stories are there. The anecdotal section has many interesting items but no new revelations. The Coolidge wedding date is erroneously noted as 1906 instead of 1905. Both books are good reading but Caroli's book takes the most comprehensive approach. Both make a valuable contribution to popular American history.

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