

The Real
Calvin Coolidge

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Chief Justice William Howard Taft administers the Oath of Office to Calvin Coolidge on March 4, 1925 as members of the Coolidge family and government officials look on.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Watching George Herbert Walker Bush become the forty-first President of the United States, I was impressed by the historical significance of the day. This fifty-first inauguration of an American President was also the 200th anniversary of the swearing in of George Washington in 1789. Not since Martin Van Buren took the Oath in 1837 had another Vice President moved directly from that office into the Presidency by election; Not since Herbert Hoover succeeded Calvin Coolidge in 1929 had two Presidents elected from the same political party followed one another into office. As Ronald and Nancy Reagan left our national's capitol, again private citizens, I thought of Calvin and Grace Coolidge leaving for Northampton sixty years before.

In only days, "Playing Hide-and-Seek with Silent Cal's Inaugural Medal" arrived by mail. Written by Dr. Darrell Crain, Foundation member and Trustee, how appropriate as our lead feature!

"Pepper on Coolidge" by Daniel J. Heisey you will find as rewarding as "Monumental History," which appeared in issue five.

"Kentucky Lives: Starling of the White House" found in The Bulletin of the Kentucky Historical Society (June of 1988) was sent in by a Foundation nonmember. Aware that a close relationship existed between Edmund Starling and President Calvin Coolidge, we are pleased to reprint the article for your enjoyment.

We conclude with our very popular book review section. Persons who bring books relating to the Coolidges to our attention and write reviews for us have our deep gratitude.

Appreciation to all who have supported and contributed to this issue, with special thanks going to Foundation President James Barngrove and Executive Director Kathy Donald for encouragement during finalization.

John A. Waterhouse, Editor

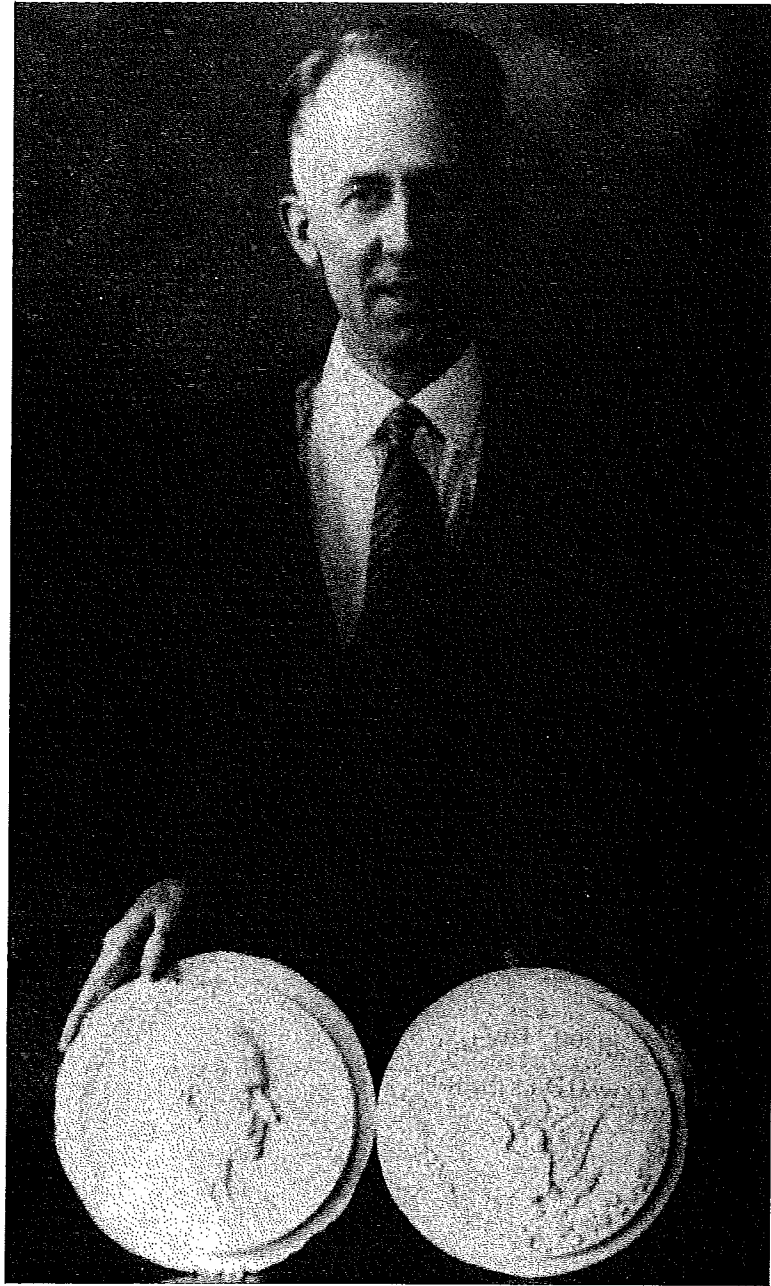
Playing Hide-and-Seek with 'Silent Cal's Inaugural Medal

By DARRELL C. CRAIN, M.D.

"Dr. Crain, Dr. Crain. I have such exciting news that I could not wait for the evening phone rates. We have found the gold Coolidge medal!"

For a moment I could say nothing. I was dumbfounded and skeptical. Then, "No. Where?" The surprise and cautious elation I felt when I heard the news overshadowed my amusement of her classic Vermont reason for an afternoon call. It was shortly after 2:00 P.M. on a Thursday late in June 1975. I had just started afternoon office hours when the secretary called me on the intercom telephone to say that "A Sally Thompson from Plymouth, Vermont, says she would like to speak to you right away." It so happened that I had a needle in my hand ready to give an injection into an arthritic knee. Since it was an out of town call, I excused myself, set the needle down and took the call in my private consultation room. Facts which Mrs. Thompson stated then and repeated in considerable detail when I returned her call later that evening seemed almost unbelievable. They could, I realized, provide amazing answers to the questions "Did Calvin Coolidge and Warren Harding receive official gold Presidential Inaugural Medals, and if they did, what had happened to them?" To appreciate the historical significance and importance of her call, one must turn history back to 1900. In that year William McKinley won reelection as President of the United States. His Vice President was Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt whose leadership of the Rough riders and their charge up San Juan Hill two years before was already an American legend. Then, with the smashing of the Spanish fleets in the Caribbean and the Philippines, the United States had suddenly emerged as a world power. The post war euphoria carried over into the inauguration of 1901. As recorded by Neil MacNeil, Washington correspondent of Time, Inc., in his book The President's Medal, "This was to be the largest, most expensive inauguration ever, to befit the status of the President as a world leader."

In keeping with a tradition dating to the time of Lin-



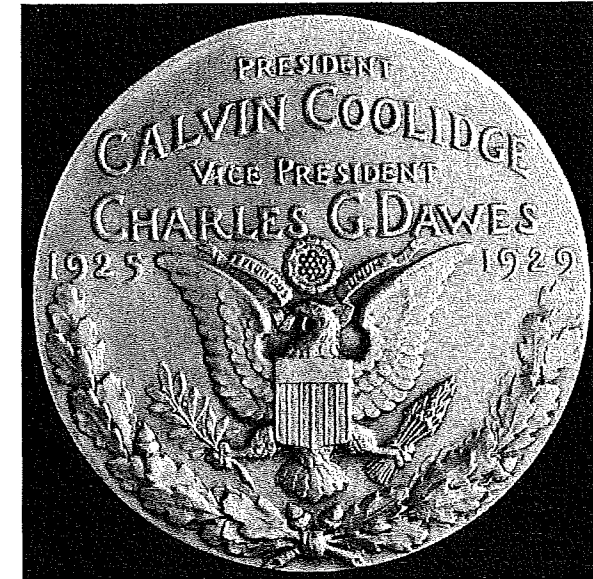
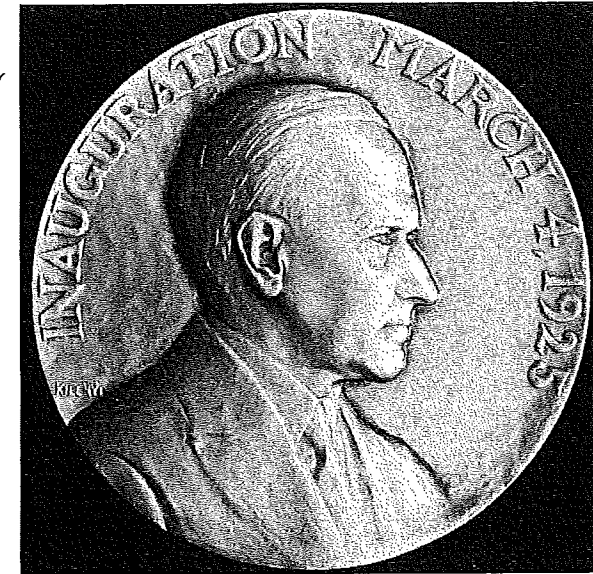
Jeweler Darrell C. Crain holds plaster patterns sculpted to his design for striking the Coolidge Inaugural Medal.

coln, the citizens of Washington organized a committee to plan the ceremonies which would culminate in the Inauguration on March 4. And as a part of that tradition a subcommittee was appointed to provide badges which the many committee members would wear during the festivities --and cherish throughout life as reminders of their participation in America's "every four year madness." For the first time this committee became the committee on medals and badges when it had been decided (no one seems quite sure when the idea originated) to supplement the traditional badges with a gold medal for the President. This would bear his portrait on the obverse and a sculpture of the Capitol where the Inauguration would take place, on the reverse. Here, again, the records are not clear, but it is believed that a gold replica was struck for the Vice President and possibly one for the Chairman of the Inaugural Committee. However, The records do show that silver replicas were struck for Executive Committee members and Chairmen of other committees, while bronze medals in the number of 3,000 were presented to various committee members and possibly to other dignitaries.

Thus was born a tradition, which, if Sally Thompson's observations proved correct, would have continued unbroken through all inaugurals of the Twentieth Century; a gold "official" medal for the President--designed and struck according to specifications adopted by a subcommittee of the Official Inaugural Committee. Gold duplicates have been authorized for the Vice President and on some occasions the Chairman of the inaugural Committee has been similarly honored. During the early part of the century, silver and bronze duplicates were minted for presentation to committee members and various dignitaries. More recently, replicas of varying size and composition have been sold to the public. Funds so raised--which now approach a million dollars--are used to help defray the cost of inaugural festivities, with surplus donated to charity. These medals differ from the "Presidential Series Medals" struck for each President by the United States Mint and designed by the Chief Engraver of the United State at the mint in Philadelphia. Bronze replicas of all the medals of the Presidential Series dating back to George Washington can always be purchased from mint outlets. On the other hand, the number of Of-

ficial Medals to be minted is determined by the committee, and once they are sold, no more may be minted. Early medals of low vintage, particularly the Coolidge and Harding medals, have thus become quite valuable and very sought after by collectors.

With two exceptions, the presentation of an Official gold medal to every President from William McKinley in 1901 to Richard Nixon in 1969 had been documented by 1971. In that year Richard Dusterberg, Cincinnati attorney and inaugural buff, published a book based upon many years of research and titled The Official Inaugural Medals Of The Presidents Of The United States. He recorded that to all available evidence, Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge had not received gold medals. In each instance an Inaugural Committee had been formed, a Chairman had been named, and plans had been initiated to conduct an Inaugural along established lines. The Neil MacNeil book, which documents in fascinating pictures and prose the history of Presidential and Vice Presidential medals and badges from George Washington to Jimmy Carter, tells us that in 1921 President-elect Harding was pressured by an economy minded Congress to cancel the elaborate plans which Chairman Edward "Ned" McLean and his committee had formulated. Vice President-elect Calvin Coolidge sent a letter from his home in Northampton, Massachusetts, strongly supporting Harding's decision. Four years later as incumbent President following Harding's death, Coolidge let his wishes for a simple Inauguration be known as soon as the committee was formed. Probably neither President-elect realized the intensity with which Washingtonians view inauguration festivities. Ned McLean, owner of the Washington Post and Chairman of the Harding Committee, was a man of considerable wealth. "Friendship," his nine and a half acre estate in suburban Washington, was bounded by a stone wall and guarded by his own security force. His wife Evalyn Walsh McLean counted among her possessions the Hope Diamond; also a strong will. "When the plans for the Inaugural Ball were abandoned," she stated, "we determined that the McLeans would provide a celebration anyhow, and pay the bills without regard to penny-pinching Senators." Accordingly, a charity ball was held under the auspices of Mrs. John Allan Dougherty, a leader in child welfare work in Wash-



The Official Inaugural Medal of Calvin Coolidge.

ington. Prior to the ball the McLeans hosted a dinner in their own home. Guests were seated at three one-hundred-foot-long tables, two of which were set in solid gold. Included were members designate of Harding's cabinet and Justices of the Supreme Court. Vice President Coolidge and his wife were the guests of honor at the dinner and at the ball. But four years later when Mrs. Dougherty again sponsored a charity ball without the blessings of the Inaugural Committee, President Coolidge refused to attend and Vice President Charles Dawes and Mrs. Dawes were the guests of honor.

In 1921 the Inaugural Committee had made arrangements with R. Harris & Company, a Washington jewelry firm, to produce a medal which my father, Darrell C. Crain, would design. Although Dad was primarily an engraver, he was also an artist and designer of exceptional talent and innovation. In 1917 he had designed the official medal for the Second Inauguration of Woodrow Wilson, which had been struck by R. Harris & Company. Through the years my father designed not only medals, but also rings, badges, pins, and plaques and trophies for schools, churches, individuals, fraternal organizations and governmental agencies. In 1926 he won a national competition to produce "The President's Cup," commissioned by President Coolidge to be presented to the winner of the speedboat races held annually on the Potomac River. Cast in solid gold that Cup features the Presidential Seal and Neptune with his trident above the rim, while speedboats race around the Potomac—with the White House, Capital and Lincoln Memorial in the background. The gold alone in the Cup is now valued at over \$25,000. Each year the Cup and a bronze replica are presented to the winner of the hydroplane races, after which the gold Cup is immediately returned to a bank vault. When he was commissioned to produce the Harding medal, Dad was still with R. Harris & Company. By 1926 he had joined with his business associate and friend, Clarence Pearson, to form a partnership known as Pearson and Crain, Jewelers.

Records of Medallic Art Company uncovered by Richard Dusterberg show that three gold medals, two silver medals and seventy-five bronze medals all described as "Inaugural Medals for Calvin Coolidge" had been ordered by

Pearson and Crain in May 1925, two months after the actual Inauguration.

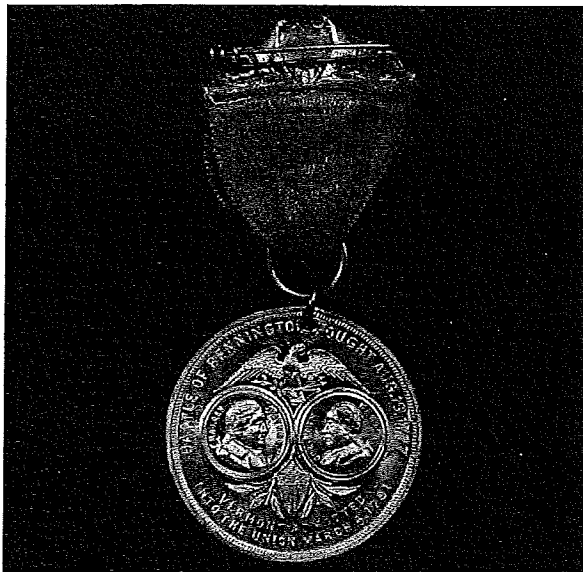
But suddenly there is a hiatus. No record exists of these medals being delivered to Pearson and Crain. Nor is there any record of the actual striking of the Harding medal by R. Harris & Company. Furthermore, no record exists of either President or Vice President being presented with such a medal. Committee minutes are silent on this point, jewelry company records are destroyed, and all persons with direct knowledge of the events are dead. I, being a high school student trying to pass in my classes, have no recollection of detail.

But through the years there occasionally has surfaced a bronze medal featuring the portrait of President Harding and bearing the legend "Inauguration March 4, 1921." Similarly, there have appeared medals with Coolidge's likeness and bearing the legend "Inauguration March 4, 1925." Bronze specimens of both are owned by the Smithsonian Institution and are in their Presidential Inaugural collections. Still, no one had seen the gold medals. A search of Presidential museums, newspaper articles, records of the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, the Archives, and correspondence with surviving members produced nothing. In response to my query, John Coolidge, son of the President, wrote me on September 16, 1970, "So far as I am aware I do not have the medallion to which you refer. I have no idea what became of it." Alice Roosevelt Longworth sent a somewhat similar negative reply.

April 13, 1975 was a beautiful spring day in Washington, D.C. The famed Japanese cherry blossoms bordering the Tidal Basin had reached their peak, while the cherry trees lining the streets in the nearby Kenwood suburb were shedding their blossoms, creating a downy covering on the street which passing automobiles blew into swirling clouds resembling pink snow. Sally Thompson, then Executive Director of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, returning from a vacation in Florida, had paused in Washington to participate in an historical preservation conference sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. With an extra day to spend before returning to Vermont, she called Jerry Wallace, a member of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation living in nearby Ar-



Souvenir badge purchased by Calvin Coolidge when he and his father attended ceremonies dedicating the Battle of Bennington Monument.



lington, Virginia. Mr. Wallace's work on the staff of the National Archives had turned up interesting and previously unrecognized data regarding the Coolidge Administration and on several occasions he had shared these with Mrs. Thompson. "Would Jerry Wallace," she asked, "know the name of a physician in Washington who had called her some months before, asking about some special medal which had been made for President Coolidge?" He did indeed, and the next afternoon Sally Thompson was sitting in my living room hearing all about Official Inaugural medals and the mystery of the gold Harding and Coolidge medals. At that time I had in a special case in my den a collection which included at least one bronze specimen of every Official Inaugural medal minted since the series had started in 1901. It was then the only complete set in existence and since has been presented to my Alma Mater, George Washington University, where it is housed in a beautiful display case in the lobby of the Gelman Library. The collection had been assembled after what seemed like an impossible search through coin shops, antique dealers, auction catalogs and correspondence with other collectors, including Richard Dusterberg whose book at that time was considered the standard reference work on Official Inaugural medals. Unfortunately my interest in these medals did not start until after Dad died in 1969 (at age 90). In a safe in the basement of his home were found many samples of medals, pins and badges he had designed and produced. Mother had preceded him in death by one year and my older sister, Lucile, by three. So it was, that my other sister Naomi, brother Alan and I sat at the dining room table in our parents' home, discussing the disposition of their effects. Naomi chose a bronze medal bearing the likeness of Calvin Coolidge to give to her son, a school teacher. I chose a bronze medal bearing the likeness of Warren G. Harding and a silver medal portraying Woodrow Wilson. These, with a badge my brother chose, we decided to keep as mementos of our father's work. Several days later, mention of my father designing these three inaugural medals was included in his newspaper obituary. Shortly afterward, a neighbor called, telling me he collected inaugural medals as a hobby and acquainting me with the significance and scarcity of the medals we possessed, and the mystery

of the gold Harding and Coolidge medals.

As Sally Thompson heard these stories and examined the bronze Coolidge medal, which I had found in an antique shop and recently purchased, her enthusiasm was obvious. Finally, with a sparkle in her eyes she said, "I have an idea. I cannot tell you anything about it right now and I do not know whether it really means anything, but I am going to pursue this study and I will be in touch with you later."

And indeed she did. Somewhat over two months later she called me at the office to tell me of detective work she had done, introducing herself with that never to be forgotten classic of Vermont thriftiness which I have previously quoted. But it had not been easy. She had run up against other Vermont traits exemplified to their fullest by Calvin Coolidge and his son John: patience and imperturbability. Returning to Plymouth with an anxious resolve to see if she might solve a riddle whose answer had eluded careful researches for more than ten years, she immediately approached the Coolidges with her knowledge and the question, "Could it be possible that the gold medal presented to President Coolidge shortly after his Inauguration was in that box which John Coolidge had so carefully preserved and which Florence had mentioned to her on previous occasions as being in their attic?" John agreed that such was indeed possible and that someday when convenient the contents of the box would be examined. And there the matter apparently ended. John Coolidge had no curiosity but the two women did. Egged on by Sally Thompson, Florence Coolidge again brought up the subject and got Mr. Coolidge's grudging approval to open the box. It was brought down from the attic of the Plymouth, Vermont, summer home and put in a downstairs clothes closet where it remained another two weeks. Then on a day when John Coolidge was out of town, the ladies lifted the box from the closet and moved it to the family kitchen where they placed it on a chair--and forty or more years after being closed, the box was opened. There, carefully stacked, were more than one hundred different items, ranging from a small flat object 2" x 5" long wrapped in tissue paper, to a large cardboard box approximately 10" square and 6" deep. It was immediately obvious that many were presentation boxes made



Gold medal awarded to Calvin Coolidge during his senior year at Amherst College "for the best essay on the principles of the American Revolution."



of leather and velvet while other items were simply "official souvenirs" wrapped in brown paper. Their hands trembling with excitement, the ladies gingerly opened each container and placed its contents on the kitchen table. Eventually they came to a black Morocco leather box about 4" square and 1" deep. Pressing the spring catch on the front of the box, the lid opened freely--and there it was! Nestled in a dark green satin lining was an 18 karat solid gold medal, 2-3/4" in diameter, with a clear lifelike profile of our thirtieth President standing out in sharp relief as he faced the observer's right. Circling the head, the words "Inauguration March 4, 1925."

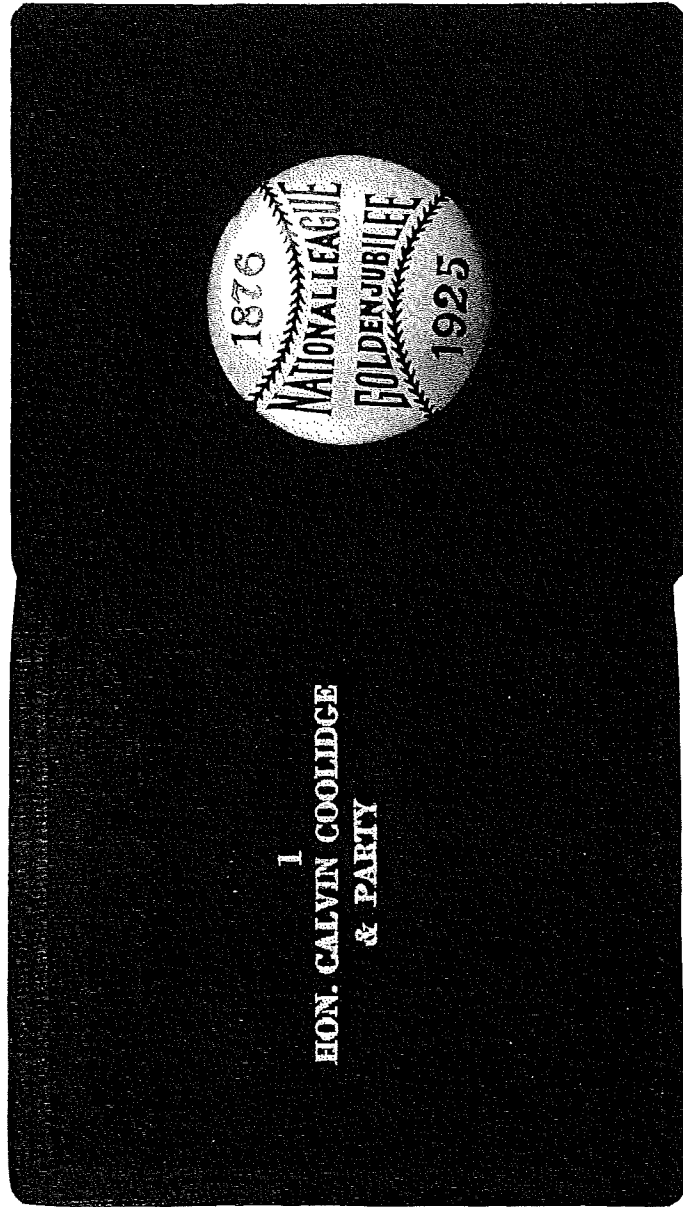
Carefully removing the medal from its box, the ladies turned it over and examined the reverse side. The words "President Calvin Coolidge, Vice President Charles G. Dawes" occupied the top half. The lower half bore the seal of the United States, circled below by oak leaf clusters and bordered on one side by the date 1925 and on the other 1929. The inside of the box lid bore the inscription "Pearson and Crain, Jewelers, Washington, D.C." There now was no question, an official gold medal was indeed struck and presented to Calvin Coolidge to commemorate his Inauguration as President of the United States. And there is one more interesting factor: files which have subsequently been obtained from Medallion Art show that because of various delays the medal had not been forwarded to Pearson and Crain until June 15, 1925. There is still no record as to when it was actually presented to President Coolidge, but it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Florence Coolidge and Sally Thompson gazed upon the medal fifty years to the day after the President first did. Indeed, noting the pristine condition of the medal and the disposition of Coolidge, it is even possible that after the presentation he had closed the lid and that the box was not opened again for those fifty years.

I had the opportunity to view the collection over a month later. The Board of Trustees of the Foundation invited me to become a member, and I readily accepted the honor. Mrs. Crain and I arrived in Woodstock, Vermont, two days before the August annual meeting. She remembers it for the 100 degree temperature which Vermont was ex-

periencing and which the natives assured us was one of the hottest summers on record. I for the awe and thrill I experienced as I viewed the collection.

Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge, Mrs. Thompson and I sat around the large Coolidge kitchen table some six feet in diameter, seated on beautiful high back chairs each decorated by a painting of a mythological figure. These had belonged to "Mother" Grace Coolidge, made to her design by an interior decorator. "The box" which I estimated at about 3 feet long, 18 inches wide and 15 inches deep, and weighing some 25 pounds had been carefully repacked. This time Florence and Sally alternately unpacked each item and laid it on the table. As I described each one, John Coolidge carefully numbered and listed them. When the box containing the Coolidge Inaugural medal was at last opened, I could only stare and shake my head. For there, in 18 karat shining gold, was the face of President Calvin Coolidge, so magnificently reproduced by Julio Kilyeni, Medallion Arts' premier sculptor of a bygone era, and, on the back, the seal of the United States and the names of the President and Vice President, beautifully lettered by my father. That moment still stands out as one of the memorable events of my life. And then, less than a half hour later, came an greater shock, for which the ladies had not prepared me. A somewhat similar box when opened revealed a gold medal of equal size, this one displaying a striking portrait of President Warren Harding and the legend "Inaugurated March 4, 1921." On the reverse was a draped female figure embracing a scroll and mace which Richard Dusterberg has identified as representing the Republican slogan, "America first." To the right were inscribed the words "President Warren Gamaliel Harding, Vice President Calvin Coolidge" and the dates "1921-1925." Although to date it has never been found, since Vice President Coolidge was given this medal, there can be no doubt that President Harding, too, received a gold medal designed by my father and now recognized as the Official Inaugural medal.

Despite its size, the Coolidge kitchen table was too small to hold the 125 items we saw that day, so each was rewrapped, numbered and placed back in "the box." After four hours we were exhausted, but we had seen treasures



Gold ball admitting President Coolidge to the National League baseball games during 1925.

which mirrored the life of a President in a way no written historical document could do. There was a gold medal presented by the French Government to honor Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic, a large medallion beautifully enameled with silk streamers which had been presented by the Government of Peru, a smaller version of the same for Mrs. Coolidge, medals commemorating the Battle of Bunker Hill, the King George Coronation, the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a bag of gold dust from a Western mine, keys to cities, passes to baseball and football games. All these we had seen, telling us of life in that golden era of American prosperity between World War I and the Great Depression when our country was lead by a man from the hills of Vermont who expounded and exemplified the virtues of honesty, thrift, hard work and dedication to peace, God, family and country.

At the Foundation meeting the next day representative specimens from the collection were exhibited, along with the two gold Inaugural medals. The meeting according to custom was held on Sunday afternoon in the little white church in Plymouth Notch. Since tourists visiting the historical area were not excluded from the meeting, a private detective was hastily hired to keep an eye on the newly found collection.

And where is the collection now? The Harding gold medal is on indefinite loan to George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where it is displayed in a magnificent case the University provided for the most complete set of Official Inaugural Medals in the country. (There, also, is a gold replica of the Coolidge medal. Originally presented to William T. Gallier, Chairman of President Coolidge's Inaugural Committee, it surfaced after the story of the Plymouth find was first told. Fortunately, I was able to purchase it and donate it to the University.) The original medal presented to President Coolidge and the rest of the collection have been presented to the State of Vermont. The game of Hide-and-Seek game has ended, the search is over, the mystery solved.

Pepper on Coolidge

By DANIEL J. HEISEY

Scholars, it seems, rarely enter elective politics in America, and, if they do, they rarely retain their positions long. There are exceptions, such as Woodrow Wilson and his nemesis, Henry Cabot Lodge. The latter learned history at Harvard from Henry Adams, scion of a family that produced two scholarly presidents. Still, the professor who becomes a politician is uncommon in America (although it is common for retired or routed politicians to become professors), and Henry Adams died in bitterness because he knew his bookish habits would not appeal to the populace. This knowledge reflects not so much upon the electorate as upon Adams's temperament. For his student, Senator Lodge, shows that, while scholars in politics seem to be uncommon here, they are not an impossibility.

One such professor-turned-politician was George Wharton Pepper (1867-1961). From 1922 to 1927 he served as United States Senator from Pennsylvania, appointed by Governor William C. Sproul upon the death of the legendary Boies Penrose. Since his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania law school in 1889, Pepper had held various teaching positions there, and from 1893 to 1910 he was that institution's Algernon Sydney Biddle Professor of Law. In 1896 he and a colleague, William Draper Lewis, began The Pepper and Lewis Digest of Decisions and Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Law, 1754-1898, a twenty-three volume reference work which secured its authors' reputations as men "learned in the law." Pepper further distinguished himself as an authority on the Book of Common Prayer and the canon law of the Church of England. For more than two decades, Pepper managed to maintain three careers: as an active attorney, as a professor of law, and also as a lay leader in the Episcopal Church. By the time of his death, he had received fifteen honorary degrees, and he had been made a Grand Officer in the Order of Leopold by the Belgian government.

Furthermore, Pepper was active in Republican politics, serving on the Republican National Committee. While he

had close associations with Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, during the 1923 schism in the G.O.P. Pepper sided with William Howard Taft. Pepper thus came to be known as a conservative Republican, and he supported Senator Lodge's opposition to President Wilson's League of Nations.

As a U.S. Senator himself, Pepper in 1927 sponsored, with Congressman Louis T. McFadden, a banking bill which proposed to extend the charter of the Federal Reserve banks. The Pepper-McFadden Bill passed the Senate the same time as the McNary-Haugen Bill. The former bill became law; the latter was vetoed. Although President Coolidge's veto of the McNary-Haugen Bill is noted by every historian of the period, it must be recognized that the Pepper-McFadden Bill, once law, sustained that same Federal Reserve System which proved to be the sole stabilizing force during the Depression.

The following essay by Senator Pepper on President Coolidge is in typescript in the archives of the Boyd Lee Spahr Library of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Although undated, the essay clearly dates between 1931 and 1937, given the reference to "the former Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew W. Mellon." Mellon held that post from 1921 to 1931; he died in 1937, and Pepper does not refer to him as "the late Secretary of the Treasury." Moreover, all references to President Coolidge are in the past tense. It seems safe to suppose that this essay was written in 1933, shortly after Coolidge's death.

Simply entitled "Calvin Coolidge," Pepper's essay does not seem to have been published per se. Certain parts of it, though, have appeared in other forms. The anecdote concerning Andrew W. Mellon and that about the country sermon are contained in Pepper's Philadelphia Lawyer: An Autobiography (1944). That book incorporated its parts on Coolidge from Pepper's earlier memoir, In the Senate (1930). In each case, the anecdotes appear with only the slightest alterations from their presentation in this essay. After recording Coolidge's comments on the sermon, Pepper concluded: "If Mr. Coolidge never thanked those who had served him faithfully[,] he was merely doing as he would that others should do to him." Pepper realized that the actions of a Christian statesman can

be comprehended only when seen from a Christian perspective.

Like Coolidge, Pepper possessed a fine sense of English prose style. His writings are cool, limpid, and elegant. The final sentences of this essay, however, betray an unfinished quality, for they are taken from Pepper's article "Why Not Calvin Coolidge?" in the October, 1924, issue of The Yale Review. Those sentences from that 1924 piece clearly display a better use of prose cadence: "Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, he [Coolidge] loses many opportunities for spectacular action by his determination to be right rather than showy. In simplicity, in shrewdness, in reserve, in homely humor and in quiet force he is American manhood at its best. Those who do not admire the type have read American history in vain."

In his autobiography Pepper treats Coolidge at some length, but Coolidge there appears merely as part of the larger narrative. After all, it is Pepper's life. This brief essay, though, contains and condenses Pepper's view of Coolidge. It is an important sketch, contributing the insight of one of Coolidge's contemporaries noted for his judicial temperament (indeed, President Taft had offered Pepper a Federal Bench). Moreover, it is written from the heart. For Pepper liked Coolidge. Pepper, comparing Coolidge with his predecessor in the presidency, said, "Harding was a poor judge of men. Coolidge had the insight of a credit man in a conservative bank." Only between serious, stoical men such as Pepper and Coolidge could that characterization be considered a compliment.

If there spoke Pepper the lawyer or Pepper the committeeman, Pepper as churchman and statesman spoke with this encomium: "As to Calvin Coolidge's administration of his office, I always found myself admiring the practical wisdom with which domestic policies were fashioned and carried out, although sometimes irritated by the lack of that scientific imagination which is indispensable in dealing with foreign affairs. He will, of course, be denied by posterity the rank of Pitt, but he may in time be recognized as the Palmerston of our political history."

The parallel with Viscount Palmerston is apt. For, al-

though he is best known both for his bold foreign policies and for his vigorous prosecution of the Crimean War, Palmerston as a domestic figure stands as something of a model for Coolidge. Palmerston's second premiership (1859-1865) saw, amidst a religious revival, the publication of The Origins of Species, a work which played a celebrated role during Coolidge's presidency. Moreover, both Palmerston and Coolidge witnessed the rise of nationalism in Italy, but the parallels between Garibaldi and Mussolini are not natural.

It is interesting to consider the comments on Palmerston by Sir Winston Churchill in volume four of A History of the English-Speaking Peoples: "Palmerston seemed to his fellow-countrymen the embodiment of their own healthy hopes....[H]is patriotic sentiments appealed to the self-confidence of the nation....In home politics... a sublime complacency enveloped the Government. Palmerston...did not believe in too much legislation. Good-humor and common sense distinguished him." These words of 1958 were, of course, unknown to Pepper when he compared Coolidge to Palmerston, but they certainly contribute to a confirmation of his assessment.

II

CALVIN COOLIDGE

By George Wharton Pepper

To a degree I have never seen surpassed, Mr. Coolidge could gauge the mental operations of the average citizen. This enabled him to distinguish between an idealism which is within common reach and one which is beyond the comprehension of those without whose acceptance it becomes mere sermonizing.

Of our recent Presidents, William McKinley seemed to me to have had the greatest capacity to get people to do what he wanted; Theodore Roosevelt to convince people that he was right, and Woodrow Wilson to express his thoughts. But Calvin Coolidge had the most penetrating insight into the American mind.

My memory is stored with incidents which disclose less familiar phases of Mr. Coolidge's character, such as his

keen sense of humor, his incisive wit and the entertaining quality of his conversation when left alone with a single companion and freed from the restraints to which he subjected himself when a member of a group. The legend of his silence grew from his innate modesty, for he could be most entertaining when conditions favored it. I have told, I think, an experience with this quality described to me by the former Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew W. Mellon.

Immediately after Mr. Coolidge became President, Mr. Mellon called on him with a written resignation in his pocket, as is customary among Cabinet officers when a new Chief Executive assumes office. After greeting the Secretary cordially, Mr. Coolidge began a discussion of the entire financial system of the Government. The talk was so interesting that not until after its conclusion did Mr. Mellon remember that he had not offered his resignation. Returning to the President's office, he said: "Mr. President, I neglected to tell you that I had come to resign." "Forget it," said Mr. Coolidge, and Mr. Mellon did.

I do not think that I ever knew an American who had a more sincere and something like religious reverence for George Washington and the founders of the Republic. He never lost an opportunity, even in the intimacies of private conversation, to pay tribute to the wisdom and patriotism of these men. I believe, if the truth were known, that the factor which determined him not to seek the second election was that if elected he would serve in the aggregate a greater number of years than did George Washington.

In his personal as well as his private life Mr. Coolidge revealed this quality of reverence. On one occasion when President and Mrs. Coolidge spent a weekend on the farm with us, we attended Sunday services at Old St. David's Church in Radnor. Mr. Coolidge was impressed by the fact that the congregation filled the edifice. "You have a good community here" he said. Then he explained. "Whenever a church is filled" he said, "that's an evidence of a good community."

Mr. Coolidge was not perfunctory in his own church attendance. He regarded attendance as a public duty and

the size of the congregation as an accurate measure of the caliber of the community.

I recall another occasion when Mrs. Pepper and I attended church with Mr. Coolidge, and a conversation which revealed again his character. After the services we discussed the sermon. Its theme was gratitude and the text was "Were there not ten cleansed but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger." [Luke 17:17-18] "I'm not at all sure" said the President, "that the man who came back and prostrated himself was a bit more grateful than the nine who went about their business. When I appoint a man to office I don't want him to thank me. I want him to go and make good."

When he was first called to the presidency, he was comparatively little known to the country at large. But he earned quickly the respect and confidence of the people. When he delivered his first message to the Congress there was an almost unanimous verdict of approval. Without a working majority in either Senate or House and with an opposition of unusual bitterness, he showed a fine combination of sound judgment and courage. When Congress adjourned most of its achievements which the country approved were measures which he had advocated.

In this way he quickly made for himself an enduring place in the confidence of the country. Quick to hear, slow to speak, he lost many opportunities for spectacular action by his determination to be right rather than flashy. In simplicity, in shrewdness, in reserve, in homely humor and in quiet force he represented the type that Americans love.

Kentucky Lives: Starling of the White House

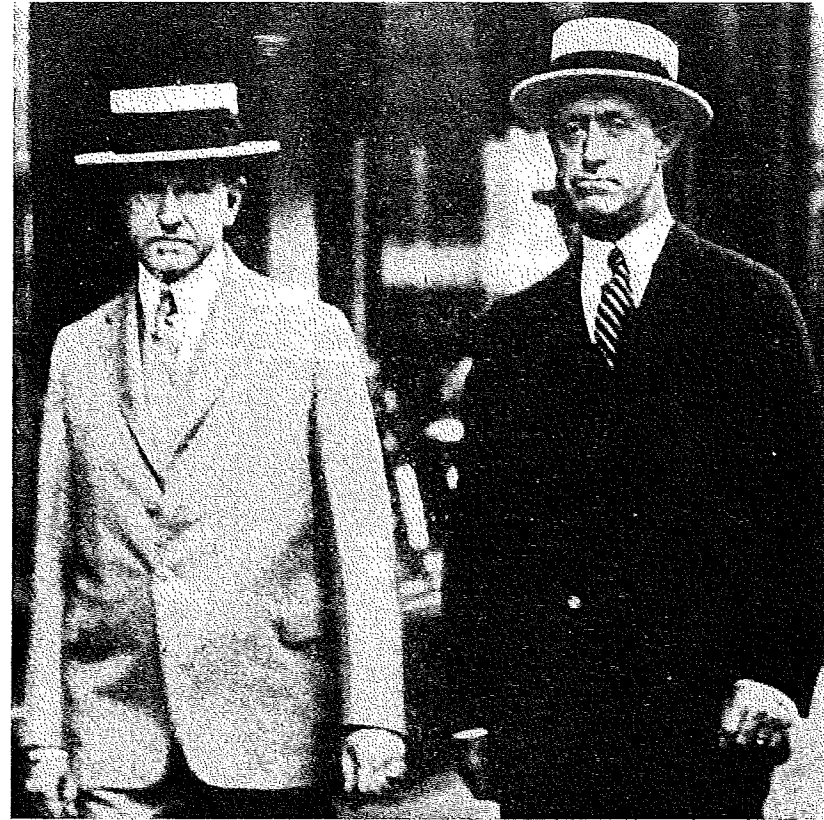
(Reprinted: The Bulletin of
The Kentucky Historical Society)

Edmund W. Starling, a native Kentuckian, had a unique vantage point for studying our nation's chief executives. Over almost three decades, from his position with the Secret Service, he had the opportunity to observe at first hand five presidents, from Wilson to FDR. Although highly "visible" on the Washington scene, Starling today is not well known. We are fortunate to have his autobiography entitled Starling of the White House, as told to Thomas Sugrue.

Starling was born October 5, 1875, in Hopkinsville. For most of his life, his career would be related to law enforcement activities. A deputy sheriff for several years, the young man became a special agent for the L&N Railroad, and later a chief special agent for the Southern Express Company. In 1914, at age thirty-nine, he was accepted into the United States Secret Service.

The new man received his instructions: "You are not working for the President, but for the Treasury Department, by order of Congress. So he can't order you to go away and leave him alone. His safety is your responsibility. The idea is to give him the maximum amount of protection with the minimum amount of inconvenience to his private life."

Starling joined the Secret Service detail under Woodrow Wilson. The president, who had become a widower that same year, fell in love and remarried. The personal happiness of Wilson and his new bride was marred by national stress: the outbreak of "The Great War" in Europe and a three-year period of uneasy neutrality. Wilson began to prepare the United States for war and, finally, in April 1917, the nation entered the conflict. Two years later, at the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson labored to bring about a postwar League of Nations and to promote international harmony. During the treaty's signing in the famed Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, it was Edmund Starling who stood behind the president and observed the proceedings. In contrast to the magnanimous and high-



The President and Col. Edmund W. Starling

mindful Wilson, Starling wrote, the other leading participants were "a set of high class connivers, each intent on getting what he wanted for his country." Back home, while pushing for the treaty's ratification, Wilson suffered at least one crippling stroke. Hanging precariously between life and death for weeks, Wilson required an absolute release from worry and disturbance. His wife fiercely protected him and discharged some routine--and not so routine--duties for him. Critics dubbed her "The President in Petticoats." The Secret Service man from Kentucky offered the view that Edith Wilson protected her husband while he was ill but doubted she made substantive decisions for him: "He worshipped Mrs. Wilson, but she could not have made him change his mind about taking another bite of toast." Starling later received a Kentucky colonelcy from Republican Governor Edwin P. Morrow, recognizing his guarding of President Wilson, particularly during his time abroad.

In November 1920, Warren G. Harding was elected. The Kentuckian found Harding to be extremely trusting, a person who could not bear to believe there was evil in any man. This trait would lead to the highly publicized Teapot Dome scandal regarding leases of naval oil lands. During this administration Starling became advance man for the Secret Service detail. On his first trip as advance man he took the mayor of New York City--and his boss, the president--to task for permitting an unscheduled stop. He recalled that "they both looked ashamed." In 1923, Harding died suddenly and was succeeded by Calvin Coolidge.

Starling found "Silent Cal"--outwardly aloof and extremely reticent--to be shy, sentimental, and mischievous. The Kentuckian remembered the president, on one occasion, looking sharply at Starling's brown suit and green tie. Coolidge returned to the White House but soon emerged with a small paper bag--containing a more color-coordinated brown tie. The two men shared a passion for hunting and fishing, and talked of retiring together after Coolidge left office. It was intended that Starling stay with the Secret Service until Coolidge got settled and contacted him.

Under President Herbert Hoover, the great financial crash occurred. Severe economic conditions produced an

influx of crank letters, threats, and eccentric visitors that doubled the work of the Secret Service. A shy, quiet man, Hoover liked to relax by fishing. An expert fisherman, he changed as the Depression deepened. Starling observed his nervousness: "I have seen him catch a fishhook in his trousers, his coat, and then in this hat." Near the end of Hoover's term, former President Coolidge died; Starling's retirement dream with him was not to be.

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 brought the Service's greatest challenge. Paralyzed from the hips down, FDR used steel braces and, usually, a wheelchair. On inauguration day, Roosevelt's statement, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," filled the nation with hope. Starling admired his optimism, vigor, and foresight, especially in coaxing a pacifist, isolationist nation into realizing that war loomed in Europe and Asia.

From 1935, "the Colonel" served as head of the detail. Starling witnessed another declaration of war--December 1941--and then, after some thirty years on the detail, retired from the Secret Service. In reflecting on his years in the White House, Colonel Starling expressed his conviction that "democracy works, for the Presidents I knew were accurate reflections of the people who elected them." -- MLM

Book Reviews

Kathleen E. Donald and John Almon Waterhouse, "Coolidge-Country" Cookbook: Early Recipes of the Coolidge Family, Their Plymouth Notch, Vermont Neighbors and Friends (Plymouth, VT: Friends of the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation, 1988), 96 pp, \$7.50.

For a nostalgic look at cooking in a 1920s New England kitchen, this publication brings back simple and tried recipes handed down through the generations.

"Coolidge-Country" has a wealth of true Vermont recipes. Having passed the test of time, they are still regular fare today in many Vermont homes. Easy, nutritious and inexpensive, many of these favorite Coolidge recipes are as suited to the 80s as the 20s.

With its interesting and humorous anecdotes and charming illustrations, this book is entertaining to peruse as well as being a valuable addition to the library of any cook.

Mrs. Clifford A. Pease, Jr.
Hyde Park, VT

Zachary Kent, Calvin Coolidge Encyclopedia of Presidents Series (Chicago, IL: Childrens Press, 1988), 100 pp, \$16.25.

This juvenile biography of Calvin Coolidge contains a useful summary of the thirtieth President's life and career. Kent, collector of presidential memorabilia and author of other children's books, has done a good job of presenting a straightforward narrative in a style that can be understood by the target audience (ten years and over), without boring an adult reader.

All of the most famous of the favorite stories and quips are to be found here, but these are presented in a manner that attempts to humanize Coolidge. The author does not neglect to point out Coolidge's taciturnity and quest for economy in government, but he does not try to judge Coolidge in light of the subsequent depression and New Deal.

One of the best features of this book is the inclusion of sixty-five illustrations, including twelve from the Vermont Historical Society archives. Several of these have not been published in book form before. Included are several nice views of Grace Coolidge, and sons John and Calvin, Jr. One shot of Calvin, his father, and aunt, Mrs. Wilder, has her incorrectly identified as Calvin's stepmother, but this is one of only a few slight inconsistencies in the book.

Overall, this book is recommended for the Coolidge fan, as adults will enjoy the illustrations, and it is easy to read for the younger generation and makes a good introductory book for that age group.

J. R. Greene
Athol, MA

Allison Lockwood, A President in a Two-Family House, Calvin Coolidge of Northampton (Northampton, MA: Northampton Historical Society, 1988), 22 pp., \$4.00.

Allison Lockwood's article on the Coolidges' home at 21 Massasoit Street, Northampton, Massachusetts, first appeared in The Wall Street Journal in 1976 and was later reproduced in the Smith College Alumnae Magazine. Now reissued in pamphlet form by the Northampton Historical Society, it recounts the reminiscences of a young girl who lived across the street from the Coolidges during the 20s.

The Coolidges rented the Massasoit Street home from 1906 to 1930. Both of their sons were born there, and the family continued to use it even during their residence in Washington from 1921-1929. Its lack of privacy forced the Coolidges to buy The Beeches in 1930, where Calvin Coolidge died in 1933.

Illustrated with many old pictures, it is well worth reading and makes its contribution to Coolidge memorabilia.

Clifford A. Pease, Jr., M.D.
Fairfax, VA

Peter Hay, All the Presidents Ladies--Anecdotes of the Women Behind the Men in the White House (New York, NY: Viking Penquin, Inc., 1988), pp. 343, \$19.95.

The last issue of The Real Calvin Coolidge reviewed two new books on first ladies. Hay's book takes a somewhat different tack than the others.

It is mainly anecdotal with no biographical material, as in Boller's book, and little comparison with their peers, as in Caroli's book.

There are nine anecdotes associated with the Coolidges, all familiar to most Coolidge readers.

Clifford A. Pease, Jr., M.D.
Fairfax, VA

Bill Harris, Homes of the Presidents (New York, NY: Crescent Books, 1987), pp 176, \$14.95.

A large coffee table volume full of beautiful pictures of selected homes of most U.S. presidents, the pictures are interesting and well selected, with the reproductions of colored photographs being excellent. The Coolidge pictures are first rate.

Unfortunately, the text is seriously flawed. The six pages devoted to Coolidge and Plymouth contain over fifteen errors of fact, including wrong dates, errors of content, and inaccurate identification of picture captions.

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