Archibald Cary Coolidge and the Harvard Library, VI. The man and the tradition

Archibald Cary Coolidge and the Harvard Library

William Bentinck-Smith

VI. The Man and the Tradition

Although the written record tells much, some personal testimony recreates a picture of Coolidge life-size. Armstrong has left us the image of a man "of medium height, square shouldered, broad chested" suggesting a "sturdiness more to the eye than in fact." One might dispute the "medium height," for Coolidge was only five feet six inches tall, and for his stature perhaps a little overweight. There was a certain rotundity to his waistline. Armstrong remembered a "countenance frank and tranquil" and "blue-blue eyes" which "looked at you steadily whether benevolently or in exasperation," rather sparse hair brushed forward and faintly parted in the middle and cut short in such a way as to give "an old-fashioned fringe effect across his broad and high forehead." [246]

This, combined with his general physique, gave him a Napoleonic look which some thought he intentionally cultivated. There the resemblance ended, however, and in no other way could this shy and kindly man be thought an imperial figure. Instead, there was a refreshing quaintness about him. One recognized him almost instantly as a unique product of a special environment. He had "a rather funny walk" with feet turned out (as W. L. Langer remembered), "a kind of strut," his secretary called it, but a very quick step and an overly straight carriage, almost leaning over backward.[247] Coolidge was one of those persons who have more important things to think about than the trivia of personal appearance or manners. Yet he could be utterly confounded if he caught himself, through his own absent-mindedness, wanting in courtesy or consideration of others. He spent money on

[246] Hamilton Fish Armstrong, *op. cit.* (note 209), p. 186.

[247] Statements of W. L. Langer (31 October 1973) and Helen G. Powers (7 November 1973).

his clothes, yet never really looked well dressed. He was always just slightly rumpled, or his tie — in those days of stiff collars — was not cinched up above the stud. He was simply unconscious of such things, and Langer remembers how horrified he was to observe that Coolidge rarely if ever wore an overcoat even in the coldest weather, although always a hat to cover his thinly thatched head as he hurried from the library to class.

There was also the speech defect which added to the quaint impression. People joked about his inability to pronounce the letter *R*. Ever current, ever retold, was his supposed response to the inquirer who asked the source of Coolidge's amazingly wide knowledge of the world, "Oh, I wead and I wewead and I bwowse awound."

Some of those who knew him well, like Langer, felt that the speech handicap was a serious embarrassment to him, particularly in lectures before large groups of students.[24] Yet once the initial contact was passed, the students got used to him and forgot his somewhat eccentric manner, sensing only his obvious command of his subject and his fairness of judgment, respecting his high standards and revelling in the way the subject came alive under his guidance.

There was no doubt that he was at his best at the graduate level. The devotion and gratitude of a generation of distinguished scholars of diplomatic history attest to that, but he was also one of those undergraduate teachers who, fathers told their sons, should not be missed. In his rather dry and straightforward manner he had something to say,

[24] His nephew and namesake thinks that the speech peculiarity can be overemphasized. Certainly it made no apparent difference to Coolidge in his ordinary dealings with people. He did once tell his nephew that he had contemplated early in life calling himself Cary rather than Archibald, but he had been discouraged by the fact that he had difficulty with the letter *R*. One family legend attributes to a childhood nurse the business of pronouncing *R* like *W*. She is said to have consciously drilled into the five Coolidge brothers this manner of speech because she thought it elegant — something like the Yankee affectation of dropping the final "g" when talking of "fishin', shootin', huntin', and nothin'." Whatever the cause, the peculiarity seems to have had little effect on Coolidge's fluency in French, Russian, German, or any other of the seven languages he knew well. At the time of his wartime "trade mission" to Sweden, under State Department auspices, his nephew asked him whether he spoke Swedish. Coolidge replied that he was taking a Swedish grammar book with him and planned to study the language on the boat. "One knew perfectly well," his nephew commented, "that he was going to get by with it." In diplomatic matters he always wanted to speak the other fellow's language because, as he often said, "I want to be the one who makes the mistakes." (Statement of Archibald Cary Coolidge, A.B. 1927, of Cambridge, Maryland, November 1973.)

and one of his basic teaching principles, often reiterated, was, "If you notice your auditors' attention wandering, don't try to be eloquent — throw in a date and everyone will jot it down."

Langer's first exposure to Coolidge was in the fall of 1920, with three other students in Coolidge's research seminar on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history of Continental Europe and Asia. They met on the top floor of Widener in one of those rooms "which I came to think of as the greatest abomination for there was nothing in them except the tables and the chairs, and the rooms were so resonant that you could hardly understand what the fellow on the opposite side of the table was saying to you. Archy was talking about the war and the peace conference and so on, and I was immensely impressed almost immediately with the humanity of the man." When the class discussed the mistakes of omission and commission made by the leaders of the time, Coolidge "was always very alert to the circumstances of the case. He would say, 'Have you thought how little sleep those men were getting and how easy it is to make a slip when you're tired?' All the way through there was an extremely humane quality about him, a tremendous wisdom, and his influence could not help but rub off on all of us." He had a knack for stirring his auditors and for jolting conventional opinions. Jane Revere Coolidge Whitehill, daughter of Archibald Cary Coolidge's brother Julian (later the wife of Walter Muir Whitehill, A.B. 1926), remembers how startled she was "when he suggested the to me unthinkable idea that the Allies might lose World War I and when he compared the Bolsheviks to the Revolutionary French of 1793 who were at war with the rest of Europe and carrying on the Revolution as well."[249]

As with anyone who has touched constructively the lives of many people and several institutions, Coolidge evoked a variety of memories. To the student of the 1890s he was a junior lecturer with an awkward way of inflecting sentences, who twisted his feet nervously around the rungs of his chair — and even in later life went through the tortures of the damned in the hour preceding his opening lecture. For others he was the genial, well-informed, widely-traveled man of the world, the conversational host of Randolph Hall who could be found reading the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) daily papers over his breakfast eggs and toast. For still others he was an enthusiastic young clubman, keen as

[249] Jane R. C. Whitehill to W. Bentinck-Smith, 11 April 1974.

a Teddy Roosevelt about the fortunes of the varsity football team and the crew.

But this was the Coolidge of a youthful period.[250] As time passed his direction became more purposeful, his determination more unrelenting, his pace more intense, his attitude more statesmanlike. His clubbable qualities, which in mid-life were of the intellectual sort, brought him warm academic and international friendships and a wide range of acquaintance among men of his own cast of mind in the larger community of Boston and New York. Otherwise for him society and social life were of small interest. Social functions were to be loyally tolerated rather than enjoyed. He avoided them whenever he could. He hated to waste time on non-essentials.

Coolidge struck many of his staunchest admirers as a fundamentally self-sufficient, perhaps even lonely, man. As one of Coolidge's most devoted graduate students, Langer could not help but note the solitary nature of Coolidge's life.

> He didn't have many people to talk to about the subjects that most interested him and began to count on my looking in on him every day at his office in the Library. He loved to talk to me about some book sale or purchase and if I had noted the appearance of some new book about European policy, I would tell him about it, and he would say (leaning forward and pointing at me with his index finger), "Have you ordered that for the Library?" That was always his first question. But he would also love to talk about books in general and about the recent events of European diplomacy, and if I did not look in on him some day, he would ask, "Where were you yesterday?" I really saw him almost daily, and sometimes it was a little bit of a burden because graduate students are very busy. I still can't go in the front door of Widener now without looking down the corridor where his office was.[251]

Members of the Coolidge family have long thought that the broken engagement of his youth seriously affected Coolidge's relations with others.[252] To have his love and intimacy rebuffed unexpectedly was

[250] By 1920 his early interest in athletics, augmented by his service on the Athletic Committee, had waned in favor of weightier matters. To his friend Bingham in New Haven, he wrote (9 November), "Thanks for . . . your invitation to stay with you at the time of the Yale game. To tell the truth I did not take the trouble to apply for tickets. I have no doubt it will be a fine spectacle if the weather is good but I am not quite as keen on football as I once was."

[251] Interview with William L. Langer, 31 October 1973.

[252] The lady in question was Corina Anna Shattuck, twenty-year-old daughter of George Brune Shattuck, A.B. 1863, Boston physician and Harvard Overseer. Whatever the reason for the rupture, it appears not to have been the presence of an im-

a shock from which he did not quickly recover. He told his sister-in-law Mary Hill Coolidge [253] that, after failing to patch the rift with his fiancée (following his hurried trip to Boston from St. Petersburg), he threw his revolver out the window of his bedroom lest he be tempted to use it on himself. Such an overly dramatic gesture gives some measure of the depth of his despair, which members of the family felt colored his relationship with other people for the rest of his life, driving him into a fundamental reserve and solitude. "I think he shunned intimacy," said his nephew Archibald Cary Coolidge II (son of his brother Julian). "A great many people were very much devoted to him, but I think he was mistrustful of ever letting himself go, of expressing emotion. He felt he had been burned, and badly burned, once. He was never going to run the risk again of getting involved."

Coolidge never referred to his own love affair, except obliquely. Once, because their names were the same, the elder Coolidge mistakenly opened "a fairly amorous letter" from a lady friend of his nephew. "I think this must be for you," he said, handing it to his nephew. "It has been some years since anyone addressed me in quite such terms." On another occasion he remarked that it was a mistake not to get married because it tended to make one selfish. He was particularly devoted to his brother Randolph's wife — "a remarkable woman of warmth and benevolence" who, in Jane Whitehill's words, "managed to combine a universal, affectionate motherliness along with an attitude of deference to the learned attainments of her brother-in-law." Mary Hill Coolidge "was such a wonderful person, such a truly magnificent person that she alone would have been enough to discourage a bachelor brother-in-law from marrying. He would know right off he couldn't possibly do as well as my Uncle Randolph, and I really think this may have entered into my Uncle Arch's attitude toward marrying." [254]

The family circle in which the five brothers had been brought up was not especially conducive to an easy relationship with the opposite sex. As Mrs. Whitehill put it:

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mediate rival. Miss Shattuck did not marry until five years later. She then became the wife of one of her father's classmates, more than thirty years her senior. (Statement of Archibald C. Coolidge, November 1973, and *Report of the Secretary of the Class of 1883 of Harvard College*, Cambridge, 1903).

[253] Wife of his elder brother, Randolph. (Statement of Archibald C. Coolidge, November 1973.)

[254] Statement of Archibald C. Coolidge, November 1973.

A.C.C.'s father had grown progressively deafer from the age of twelve. Having married a woman with sufficient money to maintain him, he gave up the struggle to compete, and retreated within himself, cut off from easy association with other people by his deafness, and compensating for his disabilities by being strictly formal, entirely conventional in outlook, and convinced of his own aristocratic superiority. His wife was a plain, unassuming, dumpy woman, without an atom of "side," and with a paralyzing shyness that made it difficult for her to go outside her family circle. She had an affectionate nature, and a healthy sense of humor, with a store of wisdom; all her five sons loved her dearly. There were no daughters. Had there been, or had Mrs. Coolidge been of a gregarious disposition, women, young, middle-aged, or old, might have flocked to the house. As it was, A.C.C. and his brothers grew up in a household woman-less but for their mother. To them women were exotic specimens, on pedestals higher even than was usual to the Victorians. At least this was true for the two shyest brothers — A.C.C. and Julian. As he grew older A.C.C. appreciated women who were pretty, graceful and vivacious — a pleasing adjunct now and then to life, but scarcely a necessity.

The painful shyness in expressing his feelings, even to those he loved most, approached inarticulateness. One of those of the younger generation who had been closest to him was his namesake, Archibald Coolidge. To the latter, Uncle Arch was a kind of second father, an advisor and friend all his youth. In June 1927, on his wedding day, the nephew last saw his uncle.

> A few hours before the ceremony, he came up to me and said, "Well, if there's anything — if you ever need anything — well, if there's anything anyone can do, you know to whom to turn." I made no oral reply, simply put my arms around his shoulders and squeezed them. Embarrassed, he said some seconds later, "Well, as I say, if you ever need help, you know to whom to turn." This remark cost him considerable effort. He was the exact opposite of people who say things and don't mean them. He meant them and couldn't say them without a tremendous struggle.

And so, more than most, Coolidge was married to his work, and the Library was both vocation and avocation.[255] It was a devotion which filled a large portion of his days, occupied many of his evenings, and went with him on his vacations or his trips abroad. He was never in spirit far from the library and he did much of his writing and lecture preparation in a small study in the stacks where he was safe from intrusion. Knowing his conscientiousness no one could be surprised to

[255] To Mrs. Flanagan of the Library staff who was leaving for a yachting trip one summer Saturday and wished him a good weekend, he commented, "The Library is my yacht." (Mary Melotire Flanagan to T. F. Currier, 7 February 1928.)

see him at the end of the day carrying out of the library a tray of cards to work on in the evening or on Saturday or Sunday in his rooms in Randolph. For the average librarian[256] this was not a practice to be encouraged — what if some of the cards got lost? But it was one of the ways Coolidge cut through established procedures to get things done. However, he never permitted himself to shortcut his commitments to teaching. Not even the prospect — much as he desired it — of hearing Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister, speak at the Council of Foreign Relations in New York could persuade Coolidge to absent himself until he had secured W. L. Langer's assent to drive the two hours from Worcester to take his place in the classroom.[257]

Coolidge's life was a life of books. He was seldom without them. In his younger days he traveled across Asia with a little trunkload of them. In later life, even in the garden at Tuckahoe,[258] he read as he walked up and down the mile-long "cedar lane." More than a writer or a talker, he was a reader. Although he was never at a loss for words, he had a distaste for public oratory. He liked the small audience rather than the large. In view of the breadth and volume of his library activity and outside responsibilities, the total of his published work was relatively slight — slight at least for so distinguished and influential an academic figure, but not surprising considering the busy character of his life.[259] Yet at least one of his books was an extraordinary achievement, showing a "prescience" (as Langer has put it) which makes it worthy of note in American intellectual history.[260] In this life of

[256] The term is used generically. One of the few times the younger Archibald Coolidge ever saw his uncle "blow his top" was when the latter, having heard his nephew apply it to him, exploded, "Don't call me libwaywian!"

[257] Langer was then Professor of History at Clark University. After this incident Coolidge asked him several times to take his place.

[258] Tuckahoe was the Randolph family plantation on the James River, one of the boyhood homes of Thomas Jefferson, an estate going back into the early years of Virginia history, which Coolidge, his father and brothers acquired in 1898. Coolidge owned a quarter interest in the property. He was also always ambitious to preserve his great-great grandfather Jefferson's "Monticello."

[259] His principal published works were *The United States as a World Power* (1908), *Origins of the Triple Alliance* (1917), and *Ten Years of War and Peace* (1927).

[260] Coolidge's book *The United States as a World Power* (New York, The MacMillan Company, 1908) originated as a set of lectures written for delivery in 1906-07, when Coolidge was exchange professor at the Sorbonne. Since Coolidge's aim was to inform a non-American audience about American historical development and American attitudes, the book is written with a deceptive simplicity and directness which are particularly attractive. So perceptive was Coolidge of the principles and

books — books as the foundation stones of learning — the Library was the focal point. As one staff member put it:

> It was funny about Mr. Coolidge, and some people might have thought it looked like he was snooping around, for he was always turning up all over the building, looking up the books he wanted himself; and he would come in at night just as we were locking up, on his way home from a dinner party or something like that, wanting to talk about the things we were planning to do. We wouldn't have stood it from anybody else, but you never minded it from Mr. Coolidge; you could tell him everything and you knew he'd be perfectly fair, and that he cared more for this Library than anything else in the world.[201]

His closest friends, outside of his own family, were those who made his work possible and successful. Although colleagues might work side by side with him, there was that ultimate shyness and reserve that for most precluded real intimacy. Coolidge did not readily give himself to others and did not expect others to give themselves to him. His intimates at Harvard were primarily History Department colleagues like Roger Merriman and Charles Haskins — or the breezy, good-humored Bruce Hopper, the war-time flyer whose great walking trip across Asia appealed to the romantic side of Coolidge's nature. But for others of his close associates — even one as close as Langer, who was his doctoral student, his assistant, and ultimately his successor — no matter how much they admired and loved the man and how much they shared common interests, there was never truly personal intimacy.[202] Langer has ventured that at least in his case the age difference and the widely disparate backgrounds were contributing factors.

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problems affecting the United States in its relations with the other major nations that most of the viewpoints expressed hold as true today as seven decades ago. Essentially a liberally minded conservative in the best sense of the term (politically he supported Taft, Hughes, Harding, and Coolidge), he was a man of forward-looking, refreshing common sense, alert to the possible and the practicable.

[201] Quoted from George Parker Winship, "Archibald Cary Coolidge," *Harvard Library Notes*, No. 20 (April 1928), p. 157.

[202] One would have thought, for example, that there might have been a close friendship between Coolidge and the man who became his biographer, Robert Howard Lord. But in point of fact Lord was "three times as buttoned up as Coolidge" (Langer's words) and, though an excellent lecturer, clear and well-prepared, and a frank and perceptive critic, Lord was an "armored person." Coolidge had immense admiration for Lord, but Lord was not the kind of man to call forth Coolidge's real affection. When Lord became a Roman Catholic and took holy orders, his former associates wondered if he would go on to a career in church history, but Coolidge perceptively remarked, "Make no mistake, Lord doesn't want to be an historian. He

Coolidge's shyness and the withdrawn quality of his personal life might suggest a kind of aristocratic exclusiveness. Nothing could be more unfair, for he got on well with all kinds and conditions of men. He was simply a solitary soul, shunning close ties. Because his work took him to many places and brought him many acquaintances in various parts of the world, he enjoyed constantly changing scenes and thoughts. As his brother Harold commented, "If his close intimates were few, his family affections were, on the other hand, very deep-rooted." He was very close to his brothers, particularly his brothers Harold and Julian. He made a regular practice of dining with the Julian Coolidges on Thursday evenings and was meticulous in having dinner every Sunday evening with his parents and others of the family circle whenever he was home.

The wide range of Coolidge's interests and knowledge was not immediately apparent to the younger generation of his family when listening to his conversation, but the young could not fail to be aware of what Jane Whitehill has called "the razor-like cutting edge of his mind." As for herself, she "tended mentally to step aside, much as I should today keep at a respectful distance, physically, from a man working a power saw."

> Alongside the consciousness of his sharpness [she added], went the awareness of A.C.C.'s devouring nervous energy. At our house he did most of the talking, while the rest of us listened, and Father put in a comment or a question now and then. He spoke rapidly, and even in an upholstered chair sat hunched forward, giving the impression that his arm and leg muscles were tense. I never saw my father relax except in a sailboat, and as I never saw A.C.C. in a sailboat, I never saw him relax at all.

Coolidge's filial or fraternal letters, written with dutiful weekly regularity when he was away, have about them the ring of love and intimacy which he did not easily show to others. Yet he had the capacity to evoke from teaching colleagues, students, and library associates an exceptional quality of admiration and devotion which seems naturally to characterize one with the teacher's gift — a teacher whose standards are "exceedingly high" (Langer's words) but based on sound knowledge; a teacher who influences by example (an admirer called it "the contagion of his leadership, his sober but lighthearted insistence

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wants only to be a humble priest scrubbing the floors of the church." (Interview with W. L. Langer, 31 October 1973.)

on all that is true" [263]) and calls forth the very best in those who come into his sphere of influence; who shares his wisdom with his pupils and treats them as adults; who inspires them and gives them incentive — that "twist of the wheel" [264] so important to all human activity.

"It is not too much to say that most of the best men in the younger generation of university teachers of modern European history in the United States have been moulded to a greater or less extent by his influence and precepts," Roger Merriman declared. Langer felt his "whole career hinged on this man. He was the one who taught me, the one who inspired me — the one who set my mind."

All the voices of the past seem fully agreed on the wisdom and intellectual breadth of the man and the attractiveness of his personality and disposition. Witness after witness speaks of his composure and good humor. Only those closest to him knew that he had a hot temper also, and that the price of self-control sometimes came hard, so hard that in a strange puritanical effort at self-discipline he would stuff a handkerchief in his mouth and turn away shaking with rage until he gained sway over his passion.[265] This childlike gesture served to cover his embarrassment as well as his annoyance. It sometimes seemed to be prompted by his not knowing quite what to say, and he usually blushed very easily under such circumstances.

As Merriman summed it up:

> The dominant feature of his character — the moral complement as it were to the immensely wide range of his intellectual interests — was an abounding and affectionate sympathy for his fellow men. Every one was perpetually running to him for advice, on all sorts of subjects; and invariably received it in full measure, shrewd, humorous, and wise. He had a multitude of friends, of all sorts and conditions of life, and was unswervingly loyal to each and every one of them; if ever they were in trouble or difficulties he was the first to hear of it and speak words of encouragement, and if it were possible to do so, to give generous and devoted help. He had a remarkable faculty for discovering the good, the strong points, in every man he met, and emphasizing and capitalizing them to the utmost; not that he was blind to their faults — for he was an excellent judge of character — but he often affected to ignore them, for he acted upon the principle that the good drives out the bad. He was always a positive, never a negative force: he believed in "getting things done," and was impatient

[263] Henry Goddard Leach to Harold J. Coolidge, 17 January 1928.

[264] T. F. Currier to A. C. Coolidge, 25 July 1919, "I have been holding off hoping that you would suddenly drop in on us and give the necessary twist of the wheel."

[265] Gertrude M. Shaw to Rene K. Bryant, Associate Editor, HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, 29 October 1973.

of the waste of useless friction and misdirected strength; but his energy was held in leash by shrewd and cautious planning, and he never tried to carry a program into effect without careful consideration of all its possible consequences. He was almost pathetically modest — at least in all essentials — and utterly unconscious of the place that he held in the hearts of his friends; but with that modesty there was coupled a very keen sense of personal dignity, nay, more, a harmless and really charming vanity about little things, which occasionally cropped out . . .[206]

Coolidge was one of those hyperactive beings[207] who are forever building. First it was his own career. Then Randolph Hall, the private dormitory — his concept — designed by J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., financed by four of the five brothers, his home for more than two decades.[208] Then it was his department, then the Library collections, then the catalogue, then the Library building itself, then *Foreign Affairs*, and then the organization of the Library Friends. One further project — an eight-year undertaking — was a personal one. This was the big country house of native stone and timber which he erected near Squam Lake on a New Hampshire hillside on the tract of land that he had gradually accumulated over the years.[209]

Coolidge in his later years had become more and more of a landowner — indulging in what his nephew John in friendly exaggeration has called a "seigneurial tendency." At the urging of his children, J. Randolph Coolidge, Archibald's father, purchased in 1893 a 350-acre New Hampshire farm on the shores of Squam Lake in Sandwich, but

[206] Roger B. Merriman, "Archibald Cary Coolidge," *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, XXXVI:144 (June 1928), 556. Helen G. Powers, Coolidge's secretary from 1920 until 1928, cites two instances. One Class Day, J. P. Morgan came to call on Coolidge and smoked a cigar in his office. For some reason this amused Coolidge immensely and for years he kept Morgan's cigar band in his desk as a souvenir of the mountain's coming to Mahomet. On another occasion, when Coolidge visited the State Department in Washington, he was deeply impressed that the doorman greeted him by name and he assured Miss Powers with surprised and strangely naive relish that such an honor was reserved for only the most important people.

[207] "I sometimes wonder if my own temperament isn't entirely too mercurial," Coolidge told Munn on 16 February 1926, "as I seem to have a good many moments of optimism and despondency which often succeed each other with too great rapidity. In general, I think the optimism prevails except when I am a bit tired."

[208] Coolidge used to say that his brother Randolph's original design did not include staircases. ("Just the sort of thing that delightful guy would do." Statement of Archibald C. Coolidge, November 1973.) Julian Coolidge chose not to participate in the fraternal project because he did not approve of luxurious dormitories for undergraduates.

[209] See Coolidge and Lord, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 334.

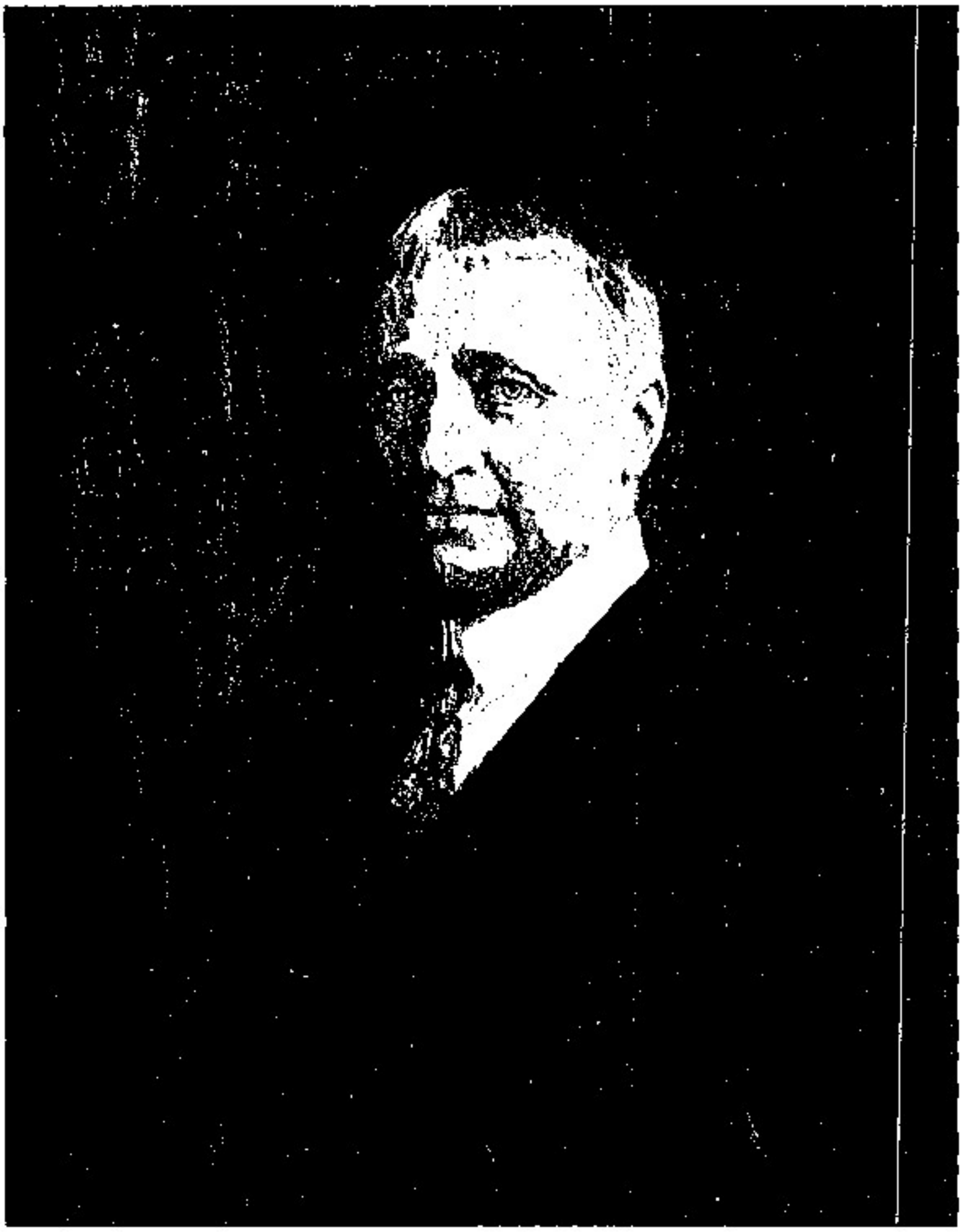
the senior Coolidge, though he added to the holdings, never really liked the place and finally gave it to his sons in 1908. Archibald took his share of 268 acres and over two decades purchased more and more land, at first "absurdly cheap," later "the opposite," until he became the proprietor or co-proprietor of 4,000 acres of mountain, lake, and forest, maintaining eight farms, a camp on Hoag Island, and a modest timber and sugaring operation which never really paid.

The place at Squam was about as much of a hobby as Coolidge ever had. The people who kept him company there were more likely to be family and family connections rather than academic friends. Coolidge was particularly conscientious in sharing it with his nephew. His namesake was "the bad boy with the good name," as he insisted on calling him until the labored humor became painful. Despite the four decades of difference in their ages, their friendship — though principally a summer matter — became fast and enduring.

Beginning in 1913, there was hardly a summer until his uncle's death when the younger Coolidge did not spend at least two weeks at Squam. From 1915 onward he went, usually unaccompanied, as the express guest of his uncle. They lived at "The Farm," a house owned jointly by the brothers, and Uncle Arch devoted a very large part of his limited summer vacation to seeing that his nephew had a pleasant and profitable time. In those early years, when the boy was only nine or so, the usual routine after breakfast was to walk from "The Farm" to whatever place his uncle had selected as a point of interest. The eleven miles of roads were then in the process of being built, culverts were being laid, and there was a sawmill in active operation. The sawmill was almost always included in their travels.

Archibald Cary Coolidge, senior, had "absolutely no gifts with his hands," and what he could not do himself for lack of skill and experience he enjoyed watching others do. His sawmill might have been more profitable in another location but Coolidge wanted it where he could look at it. He had no particularly deep interest in forestry, conservation, or lumbering. His main interest was "in saving rundown New Hampshire farms and providing good housing for the men who worked on the place and in encouraging their native skills." To such an extent the sugaring and syruping, the sawmill, and even his brother Harold's tree-planting and sheep-raising were matters of continuing interest rather than activities in which he played a personal part.

The morning walk of uncle and nephew ended at a portable house



Harvard University Portrait Collection

PLATE XXXIII

ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE

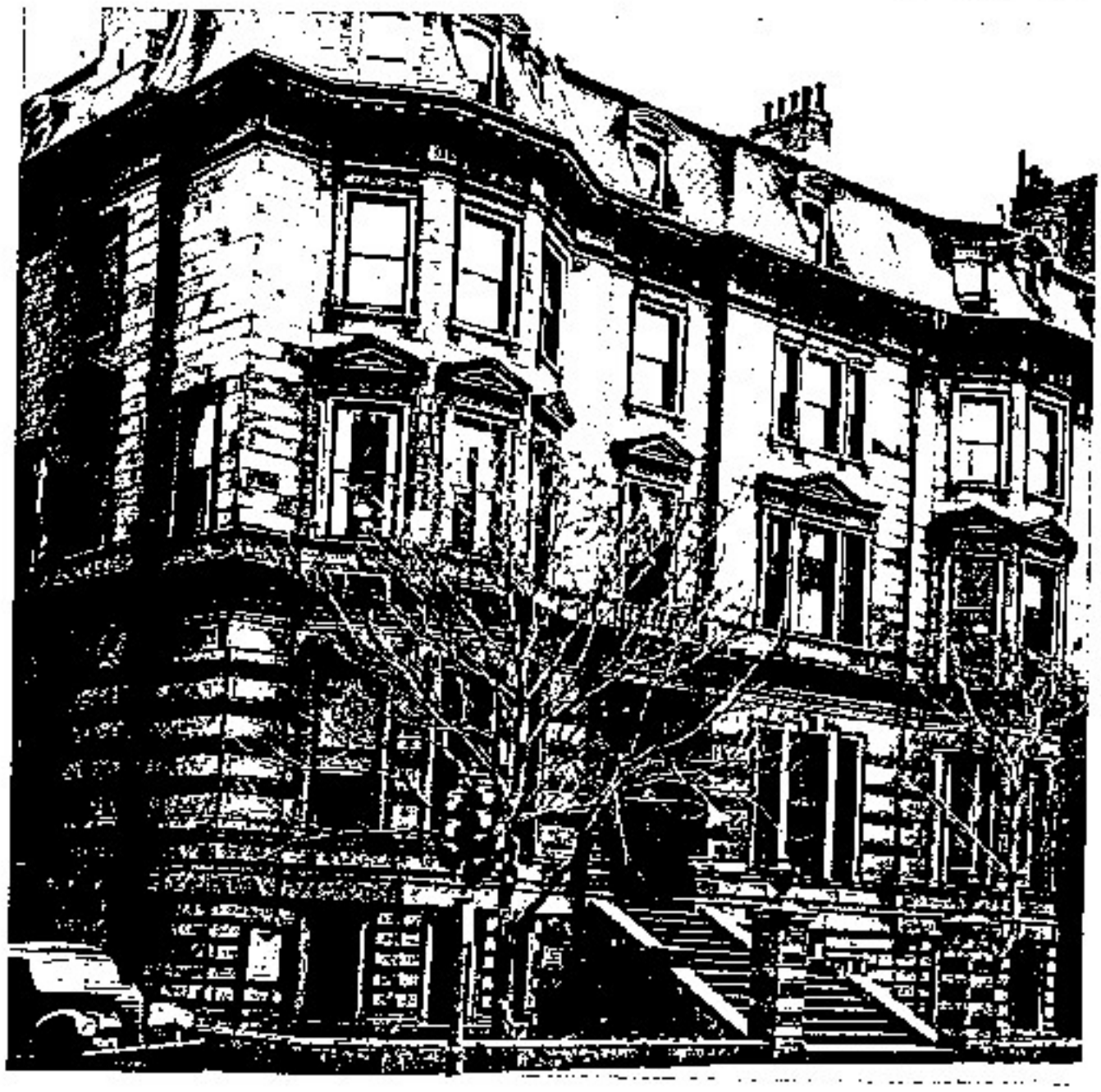
BY MARIE D. PAGE

(PAINTED 1930)

PLATE XXXIV(a)

RANDOLPH HALL

THE DORMITORY FINANCED BY FOUR OF THE FIVE COOLIDGE BROTHERS



Courtesy of Emerson College

PLATE XXXIV(b)

THE COOLIDGE HOUSE AT 130 BEACON STREET

THE HARRY ELKINS WIDENER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

August 19th

Dear Mrs. Rice:

Mr. Wells has told me over the telephone of the latest instance of the splendid generosity of you and yours. It is impossible for me to convey to you an adequate expression of my thanks, both official and personal, yet I must try to do so as perhaps no one has been in a better position than myself to appreciate not merely the present difficulties which you are so generously helping us out in, but still more the vast benefits you have bestowed upon Harvard and upon generations to come of American students and scholars. In the five years since this library was opened I have had opportunity to know the building in every corner and to realize how marvellously satisfactory it has proved itself to be. It is a great monument and a great laboratory. Many years ago President Eliot once asked me if I regarded the College Library as the most important thing at Harvard. I answered him "Yes, perhaps not at some one moment, but as a permanent factor in the value and success of the University". In these days we

Widener Collection, Harvard College Library

PLATE XXXV

LETTER FROM ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE TO MRS. RICE, 19 AUGUST [1920]

[PAGE 1]

THE HARRY ELKINS WIDENER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

merely had our collection of books which served as the indispensible nucleus but which we were unable to make profitable to the fullest extent. Now, thanks to you, we have unrivalled facilities in a magnificent setting. I have been in a position to observe the wonderful assistance that this building renders to students of the most different kinds and the unique advantages it gives to Harvard among American universities. I have also heard from the lips of many how those advantages are appreciated. In behalf of the gratitude they as well as we owe to you. Naturally the expense of running this library as it should be run is not and can not be slight. We have struggled with the task to the best of our abilities, and as you do not need to be told, the fearful rise of all costs has rendered it hard for us to keep up the proper standard of efficiency and to make both ends meet. All the more do I appreciate this fresh instance of your kindness and generosity, and that of your son and daughter. I can only hope that the work done here may be such as to lead you feel that your gifts have been well bestowed.

I remain

Most truly and gratefully yours

—Archibald Cary Coolidge

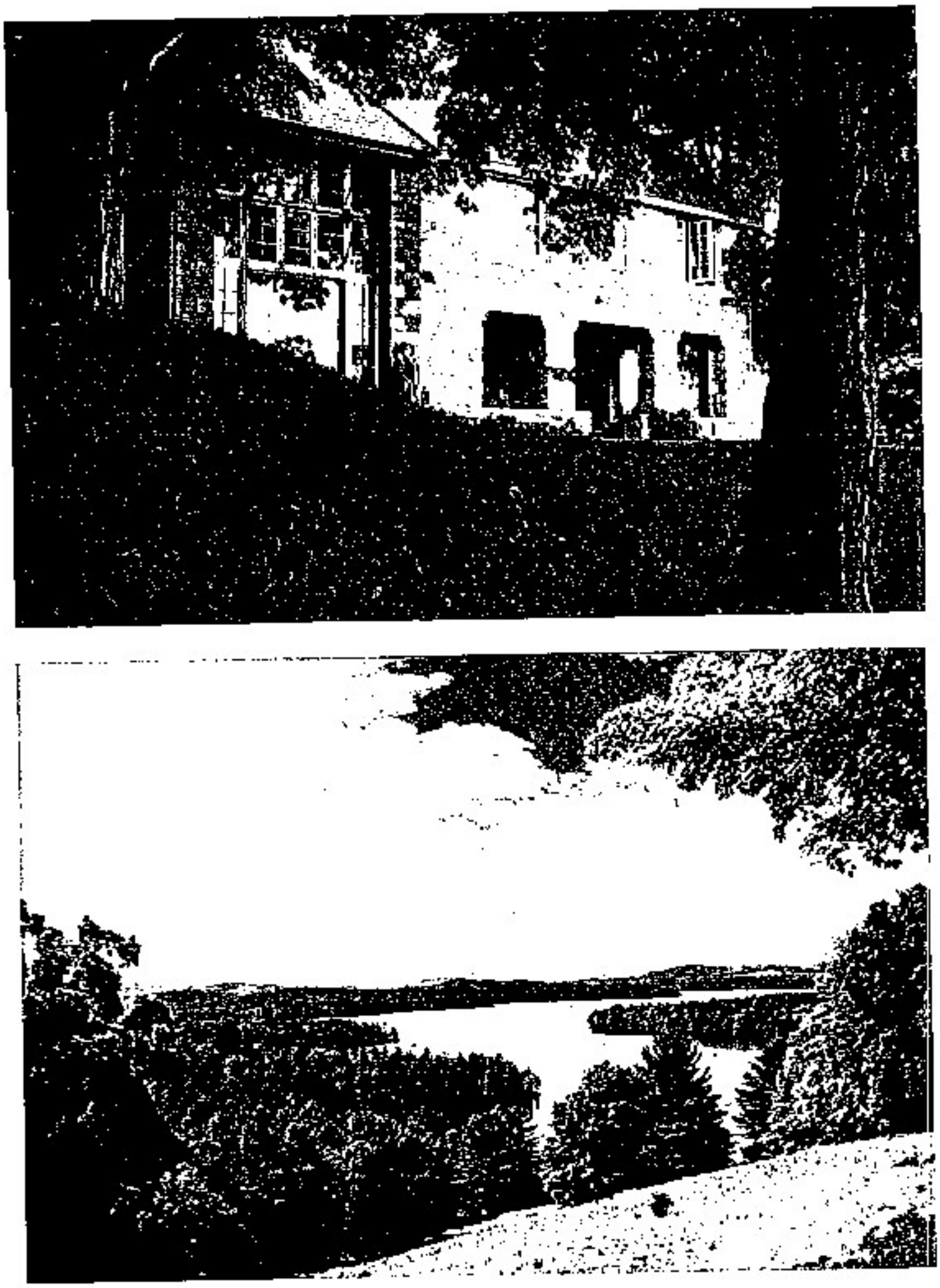
Widener Collection, Harvard College Library

PLATE XXXVI

LETTER FROM ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE TO MRS. RICE, 19 AUGUST [1920]

[PAGE 2]

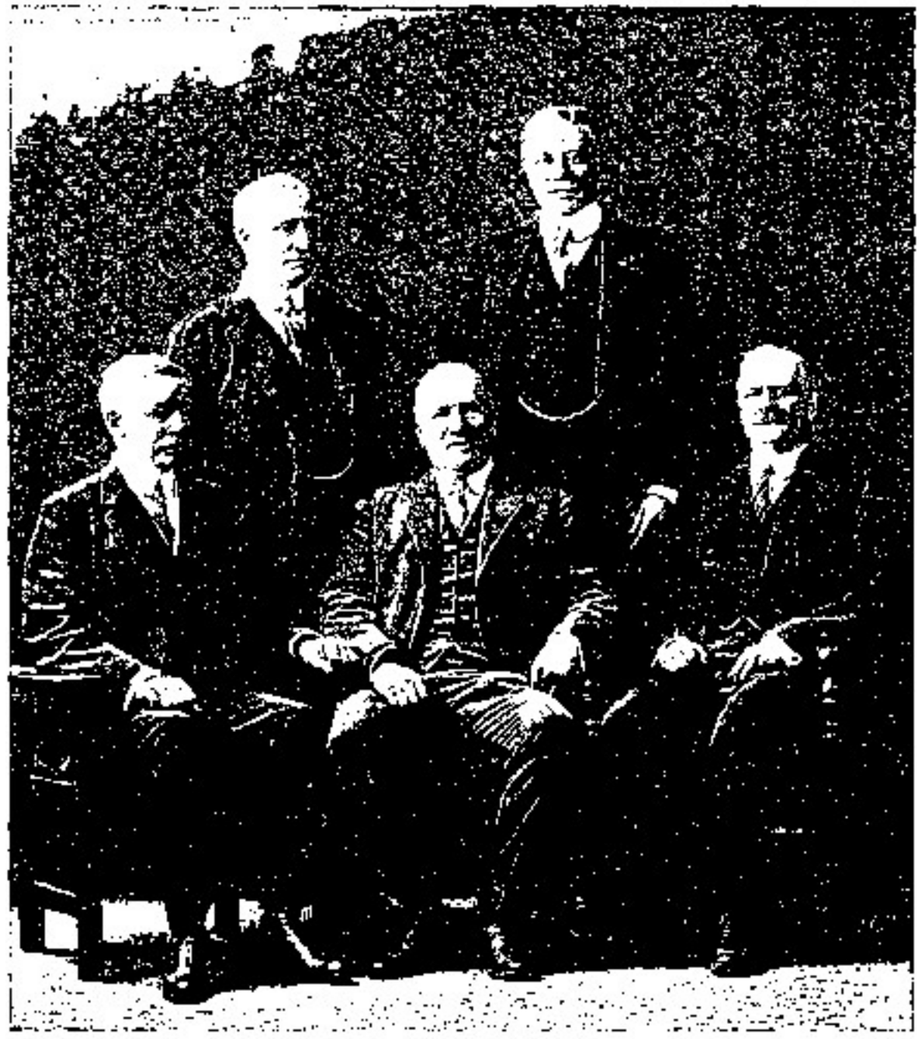
Harvard University - Houghton Library / Harvard University. Harvard Library bulletin. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library. Volume XXII, Number 4 (October 1974)



Courtesy of Joseph Randolph Coolidge IV

PLATE XXXVII

THE STONE HOUSE AND ITS VIEW AT SQUAM LAKE



Courtesy of J. Gardner Coolidge

PLATE XXXVIII

THE COOLIDGE BROTHERS

CA. 1904

Left to right: (*standing*) John Gardner Coolidge, Harold Jefferson Coolidge, and Joseph Randolph Coolidge, Jr.; (*seated*) Julian Lowell Coolidge and Archibald Cary Coolidge

IN 1924

Left to right: (*standing*) Archibald Cary Coolidge and Harold Jefferson Coolidge; (*seated*) John Gardner Coolidge, Joseph Randolph Coolidge, Jr., and Julian Lowell Coolidge

Courtesy of Anne Richards Preedy

PLATE XXXIX

THE COOLIDGE FAMILY IN BROOKLINE, CA. 1909

Back row, from the left: J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., Mary Hill Coolidge (Mrs. J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr.), J. Randolph Coolidge III, Julia Coolidge (soon to be Mrs. Henry H. Richards), Archibald Cary Coolidge, Helen Stevens Coolidge (Mrs. John G. Coolidge), John Gardner Coolidge, Harold Jefferson Coolidge, and Julian Lowell Coolidge. *Front row, from the left*: Eleonora Randolph Coolidge, Roger Sherman Coolidge, J. Gardner Coolidge II, Hamilton Coolidge, Mary Eliza ("Elsa") Coolidge, Julia Gardner Coolidge (Mrs. Joseph Randolph Coolidge), Joseph Randolph Coolidge, Lawrence Coolidge, Emily Fairfax Coolidge (held by her mother, Edith Lawrence Coolidge, wife of Harold J. Coolidge), Jane Revere Coolidge (in front of her father), Margaret Wendell Coolidge (held by her mother, Theresa Reynolds Coolidge, wife of Julian Lowell Coolidge), and Archibald Cary Coolidge II. *Seated in the foreground*: Oliver H. Coolidge and Harold J. Coolidge, Jr.

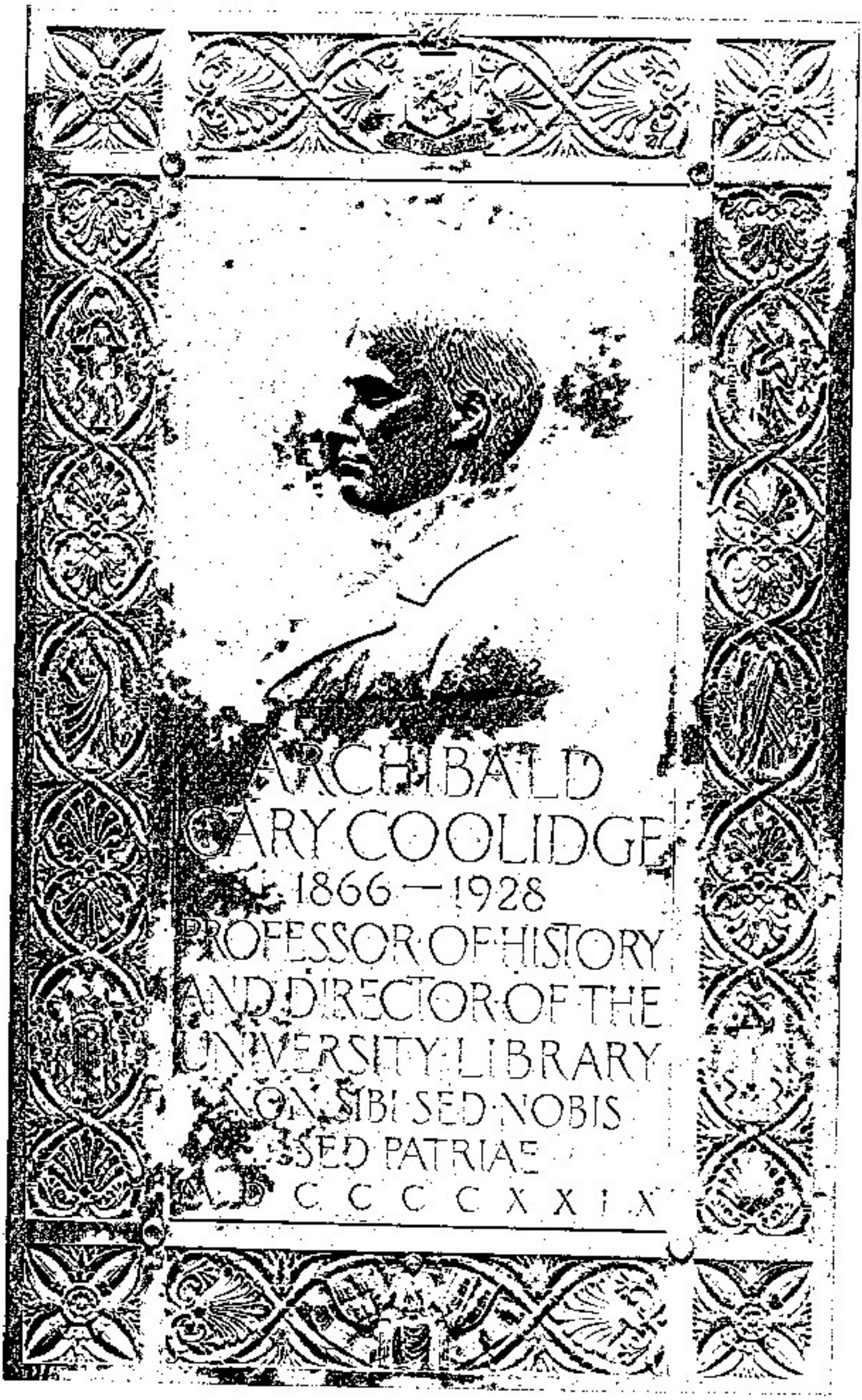


PLATE XL

THE COOLIDGE PLAQUE BY JOSEPH COLETTI

which the elder Coolidge had erected on the site where he later built his big "Stone House." Here, while the uncle wrote letters and worked, the nephew amused himself with boyish pleasures, until just before lunch, when the pair were reunited for a swimming lesson. Uncle Arch seemed no swimmer in his nephew's eyes. He had never learned to dive, and his style was limited to the breast-stroke. But he was a patient and long-suffering instructor whose efforts were crowned with success on the day young Arch, out beyond his depth, grew panicky, and his uncle told him with characteristic calm to "swim back!" He found he could.

For one who had been a modestly successful boxer and wrestler in his college days, a cyclist on European travels, and a hiker of necessity through the Burmese back country, Archibald Coolidge was strangely clumsy in his physical movements. Early in his career he had an interest in Harvard athletics, heightened perhaps by his service as member and chairman of the Athletic Committee, but he played no games for fun, and he had no time for them anyway, nor any special skill. He found exercise in tramping the roads and paths of his New Hampshire property. In the late winter he might even take to snowshoes to supervise the syruping operations. But Uncle Arch's antics with snowshoes were such as to reduce the younger generation to near hysterics. "He was absolutely hopeless on them, yet the job was absolutely hopeless unless one had them," so deep was the snow.

In one trick with his hands, however, he was singularly adept. He always wore boots, never shoes, and gave as the reason that with shoes he was constantly kicking himself in the ankle. His nephew, Archibald Coolidge, remembered:

> In those days men's boots had little hooks instead of eyelets on . . . the last three or four "holes." Uncle Arch could, and habitually did, lace his boots with one hand. This, believe me, was no mean performance. I tried vainly to master the art at odd times, but unlike such manly skills as whistling through one's fingers, the necessary practice was such that the result hardly seemed to justify the effort.[270]

Coolidge was not above laughing at himself, such as the time he and his manager, James Rogers, walked long hot miles through heavy brush to inspect a recently acquired piece of land. When at last Rogers announced that they had arrived at the northwest corner of the Atwood

[270] A. C. Coolidge to W. Bentinck-Smith, 30 January 1974.

property, Coolidge responded cheerfully and breathlessly, "I have the gweatest wespect for the northwest corner of the Atwood pwoperty."

Though his correspondence shows Coolidge to have been a person of warmth and good humor, he was not in any sense a wit. His humor was of the facetious variety, and he abhorred frivolity.[271] "Stop the kidding, stop the kidding," he would tell his nephew, using the term not in its usual sense but as if it meant, "stop being childish!" His teasing was well meant, but its effect could be crushing. Jane Whitehill remembered vividly an instance of her uncle's facetiousness:

> There had been a French-speaking governess at our house every summer of my youth, so that my brothers and sisters and I had acquired a better than usual proficiency in French, and I think our father was pleased with our accomplishments. But recently turned seventeen, I was a Radcliffe freshman, a singularly unprepossessing, and immature one, of moderate attainments, not pretty, not neat, and not gaudy either. One morning my father was accompanying me to Widener Library to help me in starting on a paper that I was excited about, that, with very little encouragement, I should have been glad to discuss. On the steps of Widener whom should we meet but A.C.C. "Jane is going to write a paper on Molière," my father explained. "Can you spell his name?" asked A.C.C.[272]

The big "Stone House" — although in today's terms highly impractical for a single man — provided pleasurable distraction from the time its foundation was laid in 1919. Coolidge insisted that no work take place unless he was on the scene, and all the materials came from the Squam property — "smooth-faced stone quarried from nearby mountain ledges" and wood cut on his own forest land. He was in no hurry — "even the long delays while local materials were being selected and assembled were more pleasurable than frustrating." His usual routine, as has already been noted, "consisted of sleeping at the family farmhouse a mile away and spending most of the day in a small glass portable house which . . . gave him the chance to look at the marvelous view and oversee his building operations, while at the same time pegging away continually at literary or some other work."[273]

[271] Though he was far from being a prudish person, his conversational code, at least with the young, did not include matters related to sex. The younger Archibald Coolidge had a feeling that this topic would have acutely confounded his uncle. "He never smiled at a broad joke, let alone repeated one and would have been embarrassed had one been told in his presence, which must have happened occasionally." (A. C. Coolidge to W. Bentinck-Smith, 30 January 1974.)

[272] Jane R. C. Whitehill to W. Bentinck-Smith, 11 April 1974.

[273] Coolidge and Lord, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 334.

The building was far more pretentious than its owner really desired — "somewhere between English and Polish baronial" in the eyes of the architect's grandson, Joseph R. Coolidge, 4th. "The great hall, 25 feet by 30 feet, was sheathed in oak panel, went up two stories into the roof trusses, with hand-hewn ten by ten inch oak beams on view everywhere." Throughout, it was "built of the best (and most expensive) materials, so that it was imposing and enduring. A.C.C. cared that it should be so," his niece Jane Whitehill recalled.

The Stone House was finally completed in August 1927 but by that time Coolidge was already hopelessly ill. He lived there only five weeks — helping abate his physical pain by reading detective stories — but he had the pleasure of achievement and, as his brother said, "full measure of satisfaction during the . . . years of planning and building." [274]

Another acquisition was the big old-fashioned double-fronted Boston house at 130 Beacon Street — the water side — on the corner of Berkeley, where he had lived with his father in the old man's last years. Although he knew his purchase of the property from his father's estate in February 1926 had expensive and ridiculous aspects, it was, he told Hamilton Armstrong, "the place I love, and life in it looks far more attractive to me than any other spot I can think of." [275] Everything about it was familiar. He loved the high-ceilinged elegance and attractive proportions of its rooms, particularly the second-floor library, with its river view, where he worked at his big ebony desk. He took

[274] Joseph R. Coolidge, 4th, A.B. 1938, who in later years became the owner of the Stone House, gave a touching recollection of that last summer of his uncle's life. "He had two Irish ladies to do for him. They required their regular Friday fish, but there was no local fish market, so A.C.C. commissioned nine-year-old me to catch some each week for them. I did so, leaving my tally @ 10½¢ a pound. At the end of the summer he was too sick a man . . . for anyone to bother him with minor details, and I soon forgot our deal. He died a few months later, and in the following February, I was in hospital with an appendectomy. To my utter astonishment, his executor appeared at my bedside and solemnly produced a check for $11.40."

[275] Jane Whitehill happened to be in the room the evening when her uncle announced to his brother and sister-in-law, Professor and Mrs. Julian Coolidge, his intention of buying 130 Beacon Street. "My father," she said, "was skeptical. It was obvious to him that for A.C.C. to buy and live in that large house would be uneconomical. Yet Father was fond of his brother, and wanted to be tactful, and so he tried to do what for him was nearly impossible, to speak moderately and indirectly about his objections. To my surprise A.C.C.'s tone of voice and manner softened appreciably as he spoke of the house, and he remained *firm* in his intention." (Jane R. C. Whitehill to W. Bentinck-Smith, 11 April 1974.)

pride in the handsome staircase with its graceful white bannisters and mahogany rail and the big hall rather daringly decorated in red silk with white trim. Pierre la Rose [278] chose the colors and materials, and Coolidge considered the result a great success.

On the first floor was the more or less formal drawing room with its bay window and the family portraits by Gilbert Stuart, Chester Harding, Anders Zorn, and lesser artists. This was the gathering place before dinner or at tea time where old Mrs. Coolidge or Miss Helen Neill presided. Coolidge always had his tea Russian style in a glass with a silver holder, and was uncomfortable if it were given to him in any other way.

Helen Neill ran the household and was the companion of old Mrs. Coolidge until the latter's death. In Jane Whitehill's eyes:

> Miss Neill endeared herself to every member of the family, from the youngest child of the clan to old Mr. Coolidge, who, when he was 97, found her indispensable. She was the admired and beloved friend and confidante of all. A Scotswoman who had studied at Edinburgh University, she was a highly educated woman, a keen reader, and a delightfully responsive conversationalist with a quick mind and a ready sympathy. Not in the least intimidated by A.C.C., with whom she shared an interest in the political problems of the time, she came, I believe, to have a warm, affectionate regard for him, and he for her, very likely never expressed in words. A.C.C. once paid a visit to the Neill home in Edinburgh, and my mother at any rate believed that A.C.C. had marriage in mind, but was frightened off by the thought of Miss Helen's unmarried sisters (to whom she was devoted).

At the end of the first-floor drawing room double doors opened into what was known as the music room, with gilt chairs and handsome chandeliers, a place used occasionally for such family affairs as a magician's performance at Thanksgiving time, but scarcely ever for music, at least in Coolidge's lifetime. Coolidge had no special ear for music and delighted in the story of his grandfather, Joseph Coolidge, who in later life decided to become a patron of the arts in Boston, following a somewhat spotty career in the China trade. The old man, Coolidge used to recount, had no musical discrimination but he played host at many musicales and after the concert would invariably answer those

[278] Pierre de Chaignon la Rose (1871–1941), A.B. 1895, is perhaps best known in Harvard annals as the designer of the Tercentenary emblems and of the arms of the several faculties and of most of the undergraduate Houses. For the greater part of his life he lived in the neighborhood of the Yard, devoting himself to literary work and decorative design.

who asked him how he liked it, "I was disappointed." In this way, if the concert had been bad, he was perfectly safe. If good, it showed he had tremendously high musical standards.[277]

If Coolidge's interest in music was limited, so too was his interest in art. After becoming master of the property he did not change the pictures on the walls, he simply lived on with the decorations and furnishings that were there. Upstairs, there were a number of "perfectly bloody pictures which Uncle Arch knew were bloody." A particularly memorable one focused on a gory head of John the Baptist, presumably borne aloft on a silver tray by Salome. Coolidge himself owned a number of Detailles [278] which he had purchased on one of his European trips. These apparently appealed to his romantic nature and to his interest in the military and diplomatic maneuverings of nineteenth-century Europe.[279]

The big house had been his home, and he proposed to accept it as it came to him. It was easier to stay than to move and so he rattled around there "in a curious combination of luxury and spartan bachelorhood" (as Armstrong remembered it) with a domestic staff to sweep and dust and supply him "with 'picked-up codfish' for breakfast and a cream clam chowder for at least one other meal." [280]

On 27 September 1927 Coolidge wrote to Lowell about his health problems. He had, he said, been "badly out of health the last three months and more" and thought it might even be possible that he would not be able to return to his work in the Library. "Two abscessed teeth" in August, a painful case of "sciatica," and a generally run-down condition had led him to conclude that he must follow a light schedule. "I shall be at the Library every day," he told the President, "but avoid

[277] Statement of Archibald C. Coolidge, November 1973.

[278] Jean-Baptiste-Edouard Detaille (1848–1912) was one of the most popular painters of the French school of the 19th century. He specialized in romantic scenes of military life — particularly evoking the military glories of the Napoleonic era.

[279] It was more an absence of early training than a lack of sensitivity that limited Coolidge's interest in art. He had the essential discrimination to recognize the importance of things artistic but felt no deep pull in that direction. When he told Jane Whitehill about seeing his aunt "Mrs. Jack" Gardner inspecting in Italy a group of artworks sent to her by European dealers, "he gave . . . absolutely no indication what these works of art were . . . What had stayed in his mind, he said, was the extraordinary swiftness with which the lady had made up her mind in each case, deciding at once to keep certain objects, and immediately rejecting others." (Jane R. C. Whitehill to W. Bentinck-Smith, 11 April 1974.)

[280] Hamilton Fish Armstrong, *op. cit.* (note 209), p. 186.

staying all day, as there is no rest to be found in one's office chair. If you and the Corporation are willing to have me loaf on my job, though I trust not for very long, I shall go ahead accordingly."

The President hastened to assure Coolidge that "your loafing will be more valuable to us than other men's work. Take it easy by all means — as easy as you want."

Coolidge never regained the strength to return to his office in the Library, even on a part-time basis. In late October he "took a turn for the worse" and (as he wrote to Armstrong) "the doctors prescribed complete rest, which . . . meant going to bed and lying in one place on my back." Through all of November and most of December he could see visitors, read, and carry on correspondence, much of it concerning the January issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Although he tired easily, he kept in "mentally good form" and almost to the end maintained his intellectual acuity.

His friends and associates in Cambridge kept him informed by personal visits or letters. He continued to "read, dictate letters and see people every day," as he told Armstrong, valiantly inviting the latter in December to stay with him, and promising to give him a room on "the floor above all the fuss of the male nurses, etc." "I get rather easily tired, that is to say a conversation of a couple of hours is about all I am really good for, but I pick up again immediately afterwards and am presently ready for another." [281]

His interest in library affairs continued unabated. The chief problem plaguing his daytime thoughts was the need to finish and furnish the uncompleted bottom two floors of Widener. Although he had several times publicly stated the need in the hope that Mrs. Rice might rise to the bait, it now seemed imperative to Coolidge to force the issue. He sent Lowell a proposed draft paragraph for the Director's annual report which would frankly urge alumni support. It was clear, however, that Mrs. Rice ought first to be consulted, in the frank expectation that she would not approve a public appeal and might decide to do the whole thing herself. By 12 December Coolidge had received word that "Mrs. Rice did not like the report a bit" but she indicated that she would come to Boston soon with Trumbauer to "talk over the matter." Coolidge recognized that, because of his illness, he could not "meet the Rices here and go about with them," but Dr. Rice's letter

[281] Coolidge and Lord, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 342–343.

filled him with "excitement." He commended the matter to Lowell's "skillful hands" and was "full of hope for the results."

As to costs, Coolidge guessed that the project might require an expenditure of $70,000 and, "if Mrs. Rice is going to have Trumbauer look after the whole thing . . . no doubt . . . a good deal more."

"It seems to me," Coolidge commented, "that however nicely we put it, Mrs. Rice is against the situation. She did not give us a finished building and she has no right to complain of our turning to the graduates, and if need be in the most public way, to do the finishing." [282]

With Currier he conducted a lively correspondence, full of queries as to the accuracy of card counts, the appropriateness of catalogue designations, the progress on accessioning Slavic items, the amount of duplication in the Boulay de la Meurthe collection, or the eventual location of Amy Lowell's library.[283] Currier reported that the man who was the source of the set of Russian Duma documents had been "imprisoned," and Coolidge expressed the "hope it was not on our account." [284]

Though flat on his back, he continued to pursue the classification of books in which he had a special interest, telling Currier, "I have not given up my intention of going to the end of the alphabet in the work I have done, in fact I have accomplished a little even here lying in bed, but looking at cards and sorting them is rather clumsy when one is on one's back. It is a slow business."

Coolidge kept pressing Currier through the fall "to get . . . the Alsace books cleaned up as part of our general drive on French history and literature," [285] and was relieved to hear a month later that the work was finished. "It has been on my mind for some time," he said.[286] He suggested that "the long closed case with the specimens of the work of the French Academicians" be opened so as to see what it actually contained. Disposition of the items could wait until he returned

[282] A. C. Coolidge to A. L. Lowell, 12 December 1927.

[283] A. C. Coolidge, Memorandum headed "Notes and Queries," 13 October 1927.

[284] Bolan, the Russian dealer in New York, had told Currier that the U.S.S.R. authorities were "even now tightening up their restrictions, and are making it very hard for dealers out of Russia to get the old books." (Currier to Coolidge, 6 December 1927.) Prices were reported much higher in Moscow and Bolan's agent could obtain only 60 to 70 percent of what he had been able to acquire the year before.

[285] A. C. Coolidge to T. F. Currier, 11 November 1927.

[286] A. C. Coolidge to T. F. Currier, 7 December 1927.

to the Library — "as long as they have lain in the Library for two years, a little longer will not hurt them." [287]

Lane gave him a quick report on 17 December, describing the contents of the cases and how he proposed to arrange the portfolios in drawers and on the shelves. He also sought Coolidge's comments on some of the trouble he was having in finding study space for a number of professors. With a mind as sharp as ever despite his illness, Coolidge saw the need to resort to principle as a guide out of the dilemma: "The question of studies is a good deal of a mess," he responded on 19 December.

> The worst of it is, the difficulty is likely to get greater every year. We must for self protection maintain the principle that we own the studies, and not the departments or the professors . . . We had better cling to the principle that the rooms in Widener are studies, not offices. That is one reason why I have held so desperately to the idea of not having any telephones in the ones in the stack. I wish I were in a position to discuss matters with you, but heaven only knows how long I shall be glued to my backbone.

Coolidge's last letter to Currier — and one of the last he wrote to anyone — was dated 22 December; it came in response to "some cards of yours and also an old list of Bolan's [288] which Miss Powers thrust on my notice." He told Currier:

> You may go ahead with the things indicated if you want, subject to the chance that I shall be so poor that I shall never buy another Russian book again. Remember that, barring our list of magazines which I may cut off at any time, I have no interest in Russian reviews or much literature of any sort after 1917; that is to say as far as I am personally concerned, I am definitely building up an old, not a new, collection of Russian books.[289]

By New Year's Day 1928 his brother, Harold Jefferson Coolidge, was writing President Lowell that "Archy gets no better in spite of the efforts of many doctors. This of course means steadily worse — and it looks as if his power to carry on as he has been doing latterly was gone."

Archibald Cary Coolidge died on 14 January 1928, a little over a month before his sixty-second birthday. The malady which struck

[287] Helen G. Powers to T. F. Currier, 20 December 1927. Miss Powers served as secretary to three of the Harvard Library's Directors — Coolidge, Blake, and Metcalf.

[288] See note 284.

[289] A. C. Coolidge to T. F. Currier, 22 December 1927.

him down and caused him such suffering was eventually diagnosed as a tumor of the spine.

In Coolidge's absence from the Library, Lane and the other principal officers had carried on smoothly, as they had on other occasions when the Director was away. But Coolidge's death presented the President with a major problem of future staffing. Lane was almost sixty-nine years old and at that age obviously not a candidate for the directorship. Potter was sixty, Winship fifty-seven, Briggs fifty-seven, Currier fifty-five. Although accomplished in their specialties, none of them had the faculty standing to recommend them to Lowell.

There is no written record in the Lowell papers that the President made an extensive search for a successor.[290] Three or four names were suggested to him — Franklin Parker, A.B. 1918, Executive Secretary of the Friends of the Harvard Library; Harold Murdock, A.M. Hon. 1916, Director of the Harvard University Press; Robert Pierpont Blake, Ph.D. 1916, Assistant Professor of History at Harvard and member of the Library Council; and James Buell Munn, A.B. 1912, Dean of Washington Square College, New York University. Because of Munn's record of enthusiastic and generous help to the Library in the years since the World War and no doubt because of Coolidge's high regard for him, the President lost no time in deciding to sound out Munn ("I fear we cannot get him" [291]) on the day of the New York Harvard Club meeting on 27 January. Unfortunately Munn was not able to meet with Lowell at that time, but the President finally wrote him on 15 February, formally inviting him to become Coolidge's successor. After five days' reflection Munn declined the post. He felt compelled to remain in New York to be close to his eighty-one-year-old father.[292] Lowell then turned to Robert Pierpont Blake, who ac-

[290] In addition to Nelson Perkins and others of the Corporation, the President consulted Gay, Kittredge, Haskins, Lowes, and Grandgent.

[291] A. L. Lowell to T. N. Perkins, 4 February 1928.

[292] Coolidge had tried to persuade Munn to join the Library staff at the end of World War I but Munn had decided, partly for family reasons, to take an administrative and teaching position at the Washington Square campus of New York University. "Now that five years have passed [Munn wrote to Coolidge, 21 March 1924], I can look facts in the face and tell you honestly that while the position there would have been much happier, the position here is much harder. My job seems to be to take care of approximately two thousand boys, chiefly the sons of foreign born parents. The boys are trying to obtain a college education and learn what America means. It is a hard task. Moreover there are more candidates available for

cepted, and on 25 March the Corporation approved the appointment. The same day Lowell wrote to T. Jefferson Coolidge, A.B. 1915, Chairman of the Library Visiting Committee,[293] urging that the Overseers give their consent at the next meeting, and confirmation followed on 9 April.

Whether or not he knew in advance of Mr. Lowell's choice of Blake — and it seems likely that he was not privy to it — the Library's senior officer, William Coolidge Lane, wrote on 19 March to offer his resignation, "to be accepted, if you so choose, at any time after April 1." Added Lane, "I shall cheerfully stand aside if you think best."[294] A week later the President and Fellows acted on Lane's "resignation," and upset Lane's sense of propriety. "I was surprised," he told Francis Hunnewell, "to learn that the resignation had been presented and acted upon on Monday [26 March], for I had expected to send in a formal resignation addressed to the President and Fellows at some date after April 1 as I proposed in my recent letter to the President."

Lane's well-merited recognition came on Commencement Day, when he received from President Lowell the diploma of an honorary Master of Arts with the citation, "William Coolidge Lane, Librarian of Harvard for thirty years, to whom scholars are grateful for the accessibility of its vast collections."

In the meantime, at Blake's recommendation, Alfred C. Potter was

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my Harvard position than for one like this which very few people would want." Coolidge recorded that he "never got over my grief that your connection with [the Library] did not become permanent." Munn finally came to Harvard as Professor of English in 1932.

[293] Not only was this, nationally, the Coolidge era, but at Harvard with a Coolidge presiding over the Library, another Coolidge (Charles Allerton Coolidge, A.B. 1881, a distant cousin of Archibald Cary Coolidge, the University's architectural consultant and an Overseer 1922–1928) served as chairman of the Committee to Visit the University Library from 1924 to 1926. He in turn was succeeded by T. Jefferson Coolidge, A.B. 1915, the son of A. C. Coolidge's first cousin.

[294] To the last, the gentlemanly Lane could not conceal his hurt at having been supplanted in 1909. He suggested that Lowell would want to consider carefully "whether the same combination of Director and Librarian is advisable for the future" and he confessed to a hope that while the consideration was taking place and the search for Director under way, he be allowed "to continue in the Library service for another year." Further, he offered "with your support and with the help and advice of the Council, to carry once more the full responsibility of the Library to the best of my ability" and added that "it would be a great satisfaction to me . . . to be made Acting Director." (W. C. Lane to A. L. Lowell, 19 March 1928.) These suggestions Lowell appears to have passed by without comment or acknowledgement.

appointed Librarian, and Lane became Librarian *Emeritus*, as of 1 September 1928. Mrs. Rice financed the completion of the shelving for the lower two floors of the stacks, while arrangements were made to expand the Treasure Room into the Lower Reading Room and to move the reserved book collection that had occupied this room to Boylston Hall, together with the Chinese collection, the manuscript division, the photographic department, and the bindery.

Finally, as the gift of John B. Stetson, Jr., A.B. 1906, in memory of his stepfather, the Count of Santa Eulalia, the Library received the great Fernando Palha collection (6,700 books and pamphlets on Portuguese history and literature), the acquisition of which had been one of Coolidge's chief concerns during his last year as Director. Also received during the year were "the Shakespeare quartos and allied literature" collected by William Augustus White, A.B. 1863, the gift of his heirs.

Among the monetary gifts of the year — indeed 15 percent of the year's total gifts for book purchases — was the $2,470 received for books on the French Revolution, French history, and Russian art, which was Coolidge's "final gift," Blake reported.[205] But it was not Coolidge's final gift. His will provided sufficient funds to endow a professorship "in modern European or Asiatic history," and to create a large endowment in the University Library "for the purchase of books or for administrative purposes." The several funds bearing his name had a market value of approximately $2,000,000 some forty years later, while the scholarly collections in the Library which — either with his personal funds or with money he was able to obtain — he acquired for Harvard at a time when they could be bought, are certainly nearly priceless.

Some sense of what Coolidge achieved for Harvard with relatively modest means can be gained by comparison with what Henry E. Huntington was spending to build his own library between 1890 and 1927, the very period during which Coolidge was active. Huntington in that time "accumulated a couple of hundred thousand of the rarest

[205] Coolidge's lifetime gifts to Harvard totaled nearly $100,000 according to the office of the Recording Secretary, Harvard University, but even this is understatement, for his advances to buy needed books (later offset by sales) and his anonymous charitable giving for people, projects, and things would further swell the account.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

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