

PROCEEDINGS

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY, APRIL 19, 1933,
AT THE HOUSE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES, BOSTON

THE semi-annual meeting of the American Anti-
quarian Society was held at the House of the
American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 28 Newbury
Street, Boston, Massachusetts, Wednesday, April 19,
1933, at a quarter before eleven o'clock.

The Vice-president of the Society, Arthur P. Rugg,
presided. The following members of the Society were
present:

Reuben Colton, John McKinstry Merriam, George
Henry Haynes, William Lawrence, Clarence Winthrop
Bowen, Daniel Berkeley Updike, Clarence Saunders
Brigham, Julius Herbert Tuttle, George Hubbard
Blakeslee, Arthur Prentice Rugg, Marshall Howard
Saville, Wilfred Harold Munro, Albert Bushnell Hart,
Herbert Edwin Lombard, Howard Millar Chapin,
Samuel Eliot Morison, Thomas Hovey Gage, William
Crowninshield Endicott, John Woodbury, Robert
Kendall Shaw, Chandler Bullock, Gardner Weld
Allen, Lawrence Counselman Wroth, Matt Bushnell
Jones, Clarence Macdonald Warner, Frank Brewer
Bemis, William Brooks Cabot, Wilbur Henry Siebert,
Aldus Chapin Higgins, James Melville Hunnewell,
George Crompton, Lawrence Shaw Mayo, William
Davis Miller, Stephen Willard Phillips, Robert William
Glenroie Vail, Glenn Tilley Morse, and Charles Taylor
Tatman.

The meeting was called to order by the Vice-
president, Arthur P. Rugg, and the call for the
meeting was read by the Recording Secretary. Mr.

Rugg then read the following memorial tribute to the Honorable Calvin Coolidge, the late President of the Society.

For the second time within a comparatively brief period the American Antiquarian Society has suffered the death of its president. We mourn now the passing of the most eminent among all who have held that office. Calvin Coolidge, born on July 4, 1872, at Plymouth in Vermont, died on January 5, 1933, at his home in Northampton, Massachusetts. He accepted membership in this Society in 1925 while in the second year of his Presidency of the United States. He was elected president of the Society in October, 1929, within a few months after he left the White House. The suggestion of such election, made to him in September of that year, was received sympathetically. He was already somewhat familiar with the aims and work of the Society, and was assured that, while the high distinction which would be conferred upon the Society by his acceptance was thoroughly understood by its members, there was no thought of using it as the occasion of enlarging the endowment or of making it anything other than an opportunity for increased service to the cause of scholarship in the sources of American history in political, economic, sociological, and literary aspects. The illuminating address of Charles G. Washburn on the centennial of the founding of the Society was placed in his hands as a statement of the growth, resources, and purposes of the Society. After some days, he returned an affirmative answer to the suggestion. His consent to become president was of signal importance to the Society. Its national character was thus emphasized. That one who had held the highest position in the nation and who had chosen, contrary to the sincere wish of a great majority of his fellow countrymen, not longer to serve in that post, should be willing to become president of the Society, was a notable event. It rendered the position of the Society in its chosen field more conspicuous than ever.

Eleven Presidents of the United States have been numbered in the membership of the Society; William Howard Taft has been upon its council, but no President has ever before been its chief officer.

It was particularly significant that he should have been willing to accept this position when many offices, educational and commercial, tendered to him after leaving Washington, were refused. He was happy in his every contact with the work of the Society. The first meeting over which he presided was in Boston in April 1930. His graceful speech of acceptance was an expression of the value of the study of history and his belief in the importance of the work of the Society.

He was interested in the library of the Society and made significant contributions to it. He enjoyed association with members of the council and the officers of the Society. He was friendly with its members. The nature of the proceedings at its regular meetings was engaging to his tastes. He presided always with a spirit which manifested genuine appreciation of the character of the papers presented and the purposes thereby promoted. He was punctilious in his attendance at all meetings of the council and of the Society and he missed not a single one while he was president. He wrote and read two of the three reports made by the council to the Society while he was its president.

Social functions of the Society took on a new attractiveness because he was frequently accompanied by Mrs. Coolidge. No one, on these occasions, would have regarded him as a silent man.

In connection with public offices held by Mr. Coolidge, he delivered many addresses touching history, government, and education. Three volumes of his speeches have been published. Perhaps a larger number of these remain uncollected and scattered through governmental publications and newspapers. A peculiar literary flavor pervades them all. The common man does not need a dictionary at his elbow to understand their every word and to grasp their thought. They reveal a rare quality of scholarship and a culture which has mastered the written thoughts of others. This quality rose far above quotation. Whatever was worth while was absorbed and came from his lips with the stamp of his own virility and originality without trace of other source. His utterances occasionally have been said by unfriendly reviewers to be but the reiteration of the obvious. His own comment about such criticisms was that, if the folks in the United States would do the few simple things they knew they ought to do, most of our big problems would take care of themselves. The nature of our institutions, the theories of our government, and the courses of conduct open under them sometimes may be complex and difficult. What he said about these matters became at once obvious because expressed with such matchless clarity and incisiveness. His expositions displayed a profundity and soundness of thought which could not be misconstrued. They bore the distinctive mark of verity. The great truths which are the foundation of character and virtue must be learned anew by every generation and applied by each individual to his own encounter with evil. Mr. Coolidge contributed to this end in high degree.

Contemporaries and friends may not be impartial judges of the accomplishments of the great. But there is a widespread feeling that Calvin Coolidge made imperishable contributions

to statecraft and to literature. His conception of the foundation of republican government, on which alone it can endure, was stated in these words:

"The sole guarantee of liberty is obedience to law under the forms of ordered government." "We are a race of beings created in a universe where law reigns. That will forever need all the repetition and emphasis which can be put on it. Law reigns. It can neither be cheated, evaded nor turned aside. We can discover it, live in accordance with it, observe it and develop and succeed; or we can disregard it, violate it, defy it and fail. Law reigns."

Although he did not carry his heart on his sleeve, Mr. Coolidge was a man of profound human sympathies. He was deeply religious. References to the importance of this factor in the life of the nation and of the individual are not infrequent in his speeches. At the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Phillips Academy, he said:

"Our doctrine of equality and liberty, of humanity and charity comes from our belief in the brotherhood of man through the fatherhood of God. The whole foundation of enlightened civilization, in government, in society and in business, rests on religion. Unless our people are thoroughly instructed in its great truths they are not fitted to understand our institutions or provide them with adequate support."

The members of this Society are filled with regret that their most illustrious president has passed from this life; but they have an abiding sense of thanksgiving that such a man has been at the head of their fellowship.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the reading of the minutes of the last meeting was omitted. The report of the Council was then read by the Director, Mr. Brigham, and it was voted that the same be accepted and referred to the Committee on Publications.

The Director, in behalf of the Council, then proposed for election as members of the Society the following:

James Phinney Baxter, 3rd, Cambridge, Mass.

Claude Moore Fuess, Andover, Mass.

Harry Miller Lydenberg, New York, N. Y.

Thomas Winthrop Streeter, New York, N. Y.

A committee of three, consisting of Messrs. Merriam, Phillips and Tatman, was thereupon appointed by the Chair to distribute and collect ballots, who reported

that all the ballots were for the nominees of the Council and they were declared elected.

The following papers were then presented: "General Washington and the Loyalists," by Wilbur H. Siebert of Columbus, Ohio; "The Narragansett Planters," by William Davis Miller of Kingston, R. I.; and "The Early Circus in America," by Robert W. G. Vail of Worcester, Mass.

In connection with Mr. Siebert's paper, the acting President called attention to the tradition that Timothy Ruggles, of Worcester County, introduced the apple into the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia; and Dr. Hart called attention to the fact that Washington's General Orders were now for the first time being printed.

In connection with Mr. Miller's paper, Mr. Munro called attention to the contribution of the Narragansett Planters in introducing Jonny Cake.

It was voted to refer the papers to the Committee on Publications.

At the close of the meeting the members were entertained at luncheon by Mr. William C. Endicott, at his house, 163 Marlborough Street.

THOMAS HOVEY GAGE,
Recording Secretary

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