

= Calvin Coolidge =

John Calvin Coolidge Jr. (/ ˈkuːlɪdʒ / ; July 4 , 1872 ? January 5 , 1933) was the 30th President of the United States (1923 ? 29) . A Republican lawyer from Vermont , Coolidge worked his way up the ladder of Massachusetts state politics , eventually becoming governor of that state . His response to the Boston Police Strike of 1919 thrust him into the national spotlight and gave him a reputation as a man of decisive action . Soon after , he was elected as the 29th vice president in 1920 and succeeded to the presidency upon the sudden death of Warren G. Harding in 1923 . Elected in his own right in 1924 , he gained a reputation as a small @-@ government conservative , and also as a man who said very little , although having a rather dry sense of humor .

Coolidge restored public confidence in the White House after the scandals of his predecessor 's administration , and left office with considerable popularity . As a Coolidge biographer wrote , " He embodied the spirit and hopes of the middle class , could interpret their longings and express their opinions . That he did represent the genius of the average is the most convincing proof of his strength . " Coolidge 's retirement was relatively short , as he died at the age of 60 in January 1933 , less than two months before his direct successor , Herbert Hoover , left office .

Though his reputation underwent a renaissance during the Ronald Reagan administration , modern assessments of Coolidge 's presidency are divided . He is adulated among advocates of smaller government and laissez @-@ faire ; supporters of an active central government generally view him less favorably , while both sides praise his stalwart support of racial equality .

= = Birth and family history = =

John Calvin Coolidge Jr. was born in Plymouth Notch , Windsor County , Vermont , on July 4 , 1872 , the only U.S. president to be born on Independence Day . He was the elder of the two children of John Calvin Coolidge Sr. (1845 ? 1926) and Victoria Josephine Moor (1846 ? 85) . Coolidge Senior engaged in many occupations , but developed a statewide reputation as a prosperous farmer , storekeeper and public servant . He held various local offices , including justice of the peace and tax collector and served in the Vermont House of Representatives as well as the Vermont Senate . Coolidge 's mother was the daughter of a Plymouth Notch farmer . She was chronically ill and died , perhaps from tuberculosis , when Coolidge was twelve years old . His younger sister , Abigail Grace Coolidge (1875 ? 90) , died at the age of fifteen , probably of appendicitis , when Coolidge was eighteen . Coolidge 's father remarried in 1891 , to a schoolteacher , and lived to the age of eighty .

Coolidge 's family had deep roots in New England ; his earliest American ancestor , John Coolidge , emigrated from Cottenham , Cambridgeshire , England , around 1630 and settled in Watertown , Massachusetts . Another ancestor , Edmund Rice , arrived at Watertown in 1638 . Coolidge 's great @-@ great @-@ grandfather , also named John Coolidge , was an American military officer in the Revolutionary War and one of the first selectmen of the town of Plymouth Notch . His grandfather , Calvin Galusha Coolidge , served in the Vermont House of Representatives . Many of Coolidge 's ancestors were farmers , and numerous distant cousins were prominent in politics .

= = Early career and marriage = =

= = = Education and law practice = = =

Coolidge attended Black River Academy and then Amherst College , where he distinguished himself in the debating class , as a senior joined the fraternity Phi Gamma Delta and graduated cum laude . While there , Coolidge was profoundly influenced by philosophy professor Charles Edward Garman , a Congregational mystic , with a neo @-@ Hegelian philosophy . Garman ignited in Coolidge a manly self @-@ respect , and inspired him with a belief in God as a cosmic conscious , greater than the human , which represented " the way , the truth and the life . "

Coolidge devotedly articulated Garman 's ethics forty years later ,

" ... there is a standard of righteousness that might does not make right , that the end does not justify the means , and that expediency as a working principle is bound to fail . The only hope of perfecting human relationships is in accordance with the law of service under which men are not so solicitous about what they shall get as they are about what they shall give . Yet people are entitled to the rewards of their industry . What they earn is theirs , no matter how small or how great . But the possession of property carries the obligation to use it in a larger service ... "

At his father 's urging after graduation , Coolidge moved to Northampton , Massachusetts to become a lawyer . To avoid the cost of law school , Coolidge followed the common practice of apprenticing with a local law firm , Hammond & Field , and reading law with them . John C. Hammond and Henry P. Field , both Amherst graduates , introduced Coolidge to law practice in the county seat of Hampshire County . In 1897 , Coolidge was admitted to the bar , becoming a country lawyer . With his savings and a small inheritance from his grandfather , Coolidge opened his own law office in Northampton in 1898 . He practiced commercial law , believing that he served his clients best by staying out of court . As his reputation as a hard @-@ working and diligent attorney grew , local banks and other businesses began to retain his services .

= = = Marriage and family = = =

In 1905 , Coolidge met Grace Anna Goodhue , a University of Vermont graduate and teacher at the Clarke School for the Deaf . They were in the same crowd , boating , picnicking , and dancing ? the younger ones of the Congregational Church . That year they were engaged in early summer and married in October , after an attempt in vain by Grace 's mother to postpone the vows : she was never enamored with him nor he with her . The newlyweds went on honeymoon to Montreal , originally planned for two weeks but cut short by a week at Coolidge 's request . After 25 years he wrote of Grace , " ... for almost a quarter of a century she has borne with my infirmities and I have rejoiced in her graces " .

Being consistently loyal , he was a devoted husband , but also could be self @-@ centered , undemonstrative and reserved , and often grumpy ; and there was the ubiquitous mistress of politics . But Grace knew all of this when she married him , in addition to recognizing in him a man of solid character . She was amiable , tolerant and possessed of an understanding heart . She could mimic her husband 's peculiarities and did so to the amusement of family and friends , but without mocking him maliciously . She knew his great strengths and understood his minor weaknesses . Socially , she was as quick witted as he and of greater maturity ; she supplemented his natural shyness with a graceful candor , and offset his occasional lapses into taciturnity with a gay loquacity that could keep a dinner table conversation going .

Coolidge was quite frugal when it came to securing a home . They rented . Coolidge did not like to be beholden to bankers or anyone else , for that matter . Independence was his way of protecting his freedom to do what was right . The same impulse caused him to hesitate before joining clubs . Henry Field had a pew in Edwards Church , and Grace was a member , but Coolidge only went along . His decision infuriated his colleagues in politics ; after all , the more clubs one joined , the more friends one had at election time . But Coolidge found another way to connect with fellow citizens : he deposited savings with a variety of institutions . Each additional banker who held some of his money was an additional pair of eyes that would follow him , and likely be an additional vote .

The Coolidges had two sons : John (September 7 , 1906 ? May 31 , 2000) and Calvin , Jr . (April 13 , 1908 ? July 7 , 1924) . Calvin 's death at age 16 from blood poisoning brought on by an infected blister " hurt him terribly , " according to son John . John became a railroad executive , helped to start the Coolidge Foundation , and was instrumental in creating the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site .

= = Local political office = =

= = = City offices = = =

The Republican Party was dominant in New England in Coolidge 's time , and he followed Hammond 's and Field 's example by becoming active in local politics . In 1896 Coolidge campaigned for Republican presidential candidate William McKinley , and the next year he was selected to be a member of the Republican City Committee . In 1898 , he won election to the City Council of Northampton , placing second in a ward where the top three candidates were elected . The position offered no salary , but provided Coolidge invaluable political experience . In 1899 , he declined renomination , running instead for City Solicitor , a position elected by the City Council . He was elected for a one @-@ year term in 1900 , and reelected in 1901 . This position gave Coolidge more experience as a lawyer and paid a salary of \$ 600 . In 1902 , the city council selected a Democrat for city solicitor , and Coolidge returned to private practice . Soon thereafter , however , the clerk of courts for the county died , and Coolidge was chosen to replace him . The position paid well , but it barred him from practicing law , so he remained at the job for only one year . In 1904 , Coolidge suffered his sole defeat at the ballot box , losing an election to the Northampton school board . When told that some of his neighbors voted against him because he had no children in the schools he would govern , Coolidge replied , " Might give me time ! "

= = = State legislator and mayor = = =

In 1906 , the local Republican committee nominated Coolidge for election to the state House of Representatives . He won a close victory over the incumbent Democrat , and reported to Boston for the 1907 session of the Massachusetts General Court . In his freshman term , Coolidge served on minor committees and , although he usually voted with the party , was known as a Progressive Republican , voting in favor of such measures as women 's suffrage and the direct election of Senators . While in Boston , Coolidge became an ally , and then a liegeman , of then U.S. Senator Winthrop Murray Crane who controlled the western faction of the Massachusetts Republican Party ; Crane 's party rival in the east of the commonwealth was U.S. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge . Another key strategic alliance which Coolidge forged was with Guy Currier , who had served in both state houses and had the social distinction , wealth , personal charm and broad circle of friends which Coolidge lacked , and which would have a lasting impact on his political career . In 1907 , he was elected to a second term , and in the 1908 session , Coolidge was more outspoken , though not in a leadership position .

Instead of vying for another term in the State House , Coolidge returned home to his growing family and ran for mayor of Northampton when the incumbent Democrat retired . He was well liked in the town , and defeated his challenger by a vote of 1 @,@ 597 to 1 @,@ 409 . During his first term (1910 to 1911) , he increased teachers ' salaries and retired some of the city 's debt while still managing to effect a slight tax decrease . He was renominated in 1911 , and defeated the same opponent by a slightly larger margin .

In 1911 , the State Senator for the Hampshire County area retired and successfully encouraged Coolidge to run for his seat for the 1912 session ; Coolidge defeated his Democratic opponent by a large margin . At the start of that term , he became chairman of a committee to arbitrate the " Bread and Roses " strike by the workers of the American Woolen Company in Lawrence , Massachusetts . After two tense months , the company agreed to the workers ' demands , in a settlement proposed by the committee . A major issue affecting Massachusetts Republicans that year was the party split between the progressive wing , which favored Theodore Roosevelt , and the conservative wing , which favored William Howard Taft . Although he favored some progressive measures , Coolidge refused to leave the Republican party . When the new Progressive Party declined to run a candidate in his state senate district , Coolidge won reelection against his Democratic opponent by an increased margin .

In the 1913 session , Coolidge enjoyed renowned success in arduously navigating to passage the Western Trolley Act which connected Northampton with a dozen similar industrial communities in western Massachusetts . Coolidge intended to retire after his second term as was the custom , but when the President of the State Senate , Levi H. Greenwood , considered running for Lieutenant

Governor , Coolidge decided to run again for the Senate in the hopes of being elected as its presiding officer . Although Greenwood later decided to run for reelection to the Senate , he was defeated primarily due to his opposition to women 's suffrage ; Coolidge was in favor of the women 's vote , won his own re @-@ election and with Crane 's help , assumed the presidency of a closely divided Senate . After his election in January 1914 , Coolidge delivered a published and frequently quoted speech entitled Have Faith in Massachusetts , which summarized his philosophy of government .

Coolidge 's speech was well received , and he attracted some admirers on its account ; towards the end of the term , many of them were proposing his name for nomination to lieutenant governor . After winning reelection to the Senate by an increased margin in the 1914 elections , Coolidge was reelected unanimously to be President of the Senate . Coolidge 's supporters , led by fellow Amherst alumnus Frank Stearns , encouraged him again to run for lieutenant governor . Stearns , an advertising executive , became another key ally , and began a publicity campaign on Coolidge 's behalf before he announced his candidacy at the end of the 1915 legislative session .

= = Lieutenant Governor and Governor of Massachusetts = =

Coolidge entered the primary election for lieutenant governor and was nominated to run alongside gubernatorial candidate Samuel W. McCall . Coolidge was the leading vote @-@ getter in the Republican primary , and balanced the Republican ticket by adding a western presence to McCall 's eastern base of support . McCall and Coolidge won the 1915 election to their respective one @-@ year terms , with Coolidge defeating his opponent by more than 50 @,@ 000 votes .

In Massachusetts , the lieutenant governor does not preside over the state Senate , as is the case in many other states ; nevertheless , as lieutenant governor , Coolidge was a deputy governor functioning as administrative inspector and was a member of the governor 's council . He was also chairman of the finance committee and the pardons committee . As a full @-@ time elected official , Coolidge discontinued his law practice in 1916 , though his family continued to live in Northampton . McCall and Coolidge were both reelected in 1916 and again in 1917 . When McCall decided that he would not stand for a fourth term , Coolidge announced his intention to run for governor .

= = = 1918 election = = =

Coolidge was unopposed for the Republican nomination for Governor of Massachusetts in 1918 . He and his running mate , Channing Cox , a Boston lawyer and Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives , ran on the previous administration 's record : fiscal conservatism , a vague opposition to Prohibition , support for women 's suffrage , and support for American involvement in World War I. The issue of the war proved divisive , especially among Irish- and German Americans . Coolidge was elected by a margin of 16 @,@ 773 votes over his opponent , Richard H. Long , in the smallest margin of victory of any of his statewide campaigns .

= = = Boston Police Strike = = =

In 1919 , in reaction to a plan of the policemen of the Boston Police Department to register with a union , Police Commissioner Edwin U. Curtis announced that such an act would not be tolerated . In August of that year , the American Federation of Labor issued a charter to the Boston Police Union . Curtis declared the union 's leaders were guilty of insubordination and would be relieved of duty , but indicated he would cancel their suspension if the union was dissolved by September 4 . The mayor of Boston , Andrew Peters , convinced Curtis to delay his action for a few days , but with no results , and Curtis suspended the union leaders on September 8 . The following day , about three @-@ quarters of the policemen in Boston went on strike . Coolidge , tacitly but fully in support of Curtis ' position , closely monitored the situation but initially deferred to the local authorities . He anticipated that only a resulting measure of lawlessness could sufficiently prompt the public to understand and appreciate the controlling principle ? that a policeman does not strike . That night and the next ,

there was sporadic violence and rioting in the unruly city . Peters , concerned about sympathy strikes by the firemen and others , called up some units of the Massachusetts National Guard stationed in the Boston area pursuant to an old and obscure legal authority , and relieved Curtis of duty .

Coolidge , sensing the severity of circumstances were then propitious to his intervention , conferred with Crane 's operative , William Butler , and then acted . He called up more units of the National Guard , restored Curtis to office , and took personal control of the police force . Curtis proclaimed that all of the strikers were fired from their jobs , and Coolidge called for a new police force to be recruited . That night Coolidge received a telegram from AFL leader Samuel Gompers . " Whatever disorder has occurred " , Gompers wrote , " is due to Curtis 's order in which the right of the policemen has been denied ? " Coolidge publicly answered Gompers 's telegram , denying any justification whatsoever for the strike ? and his response launched him into the national consciousness (quoted , above left) . Newspapers across the nation picked up on Coolidge 's statement and he became the newest hero to opponents of the strike . In the midst of the First Red Scare , many Americans were terrified of the spread of communist revolution , like those that had taken place in Russia , Hungary , and Germany . While Coolidge had lost some friends among organized labor , conservatives across the nation had seen a rising star . Although he usually acted with deliberation , the Boston police strike gave him a national reputation as a decisive leader , and as a strict enforcer of law and order . The Boston Police Patrolman Association was finally formed in 1965 ; it would be unionized in 1998 .

= = = 1919 election = = =

Coolidge and Cox were renominated for their respective offices in 1919 . By this time Coolidge 's supporters (especially Stearns) had publicized his actions in the Police Strike around the state and the nation and some of Coolidge 's speeches were published in book form . He faced the same opponent as in 1918 , Richard Long , but this time Coolidge defeated him by 125 @, @ 101 votes , more than seven times his margin of victory from a year earlier . His actions in the police strike , combined with the massive electoral victory , led to suggestions that Coolidge run for president in 1920 .

= = = Legislation and vetoes as governor = = =

By the time Coolidge was inaugurated on January 2 , 1919 , the First World War had ended , and Coolidge pushed the legislature to give a \$ 100 bonus to Massachusetts veterans . He also signed a bill reducing the work week for women and children from fifty @-@ four hours to forty @-@ eight , saying , " We must humanize the industry , or the system will break down . " He signed into law a budget that kept the tax rates the same , while trimming \$ 4 million from expenditures , thus allowing the state to retire some of its debt .

Coolidge also wielded the veto pen as governor . His most publicized veto prevented an increase in legislators ' pay by 50 % . Although Coolidge was personally opposed to Prohibition , he vetoed a bill in May 1920 that would have allowed the sale of beer or wine of 2 @.@ 75 % alcohol or less , in Massachusetts in violation of the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution . " Opinions and instructions do not outmatch the Constitution , " he said in his veto message . " Against it , they are void . "

= = Vice presidency = =

= = = 1920 election = = =

At the 1920 Republican National Convention , most of the delegates were selected by state party conventions , not primaries . As such , the field was divided among many local favorites . Coolidge

was one such candidate , and while he placed as high as sixth in the voting , the powerful party bosses running the convention , primarily the party 's U.S. Senators , never considered him seriously . After ten ballots , the bosses and then the delegates settled on Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio as their nominee for president . When the time came to select a vice presidential nominee , the bosses also made and announced their decision on whom they wanted ? Sen. Irvine Lenroot of Wisconsin ? and then prematurely departed after his name was put forth , relying on the rank and file to confirm their decision . A delegate from Oregon , Wallace McCamant , having read *Have Faith* in Massachusetts , proposed Coolidge for vice president instead . The suggestion caught on quickly with the masses starving for an act of independence from the absent bosses , and Coolidge was unexpectedly nominated .

The Democrats nominated another Ohioan , James M. Cox , for president and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy , Franklin D. Roosevelt , for vice president . The question of the United States joining the League of Nations was a major issue in the campaign , as was the unfinished legacy of Progressivism . Harding ran a " front @-@ porch " campaign from his home in Marion , Ohio , but Coolidge took to the campaign trail in the Upper South , New York , and New England ? his audiences carefully limited to those familiar with Coolidge and those placing a premium upon concise and short speeches . On November 2 , 1920 , Harding and Coolidge were victorious in a landslide , winning more than 60 percent of the popular vote , including every state outside the South . They also won in Tennessee , the first time a Republican ticket had won a Southern state since Reconstruction .

= = = " Silent Cal " = = =

The U.S. vice presidency did not carry many official duties , but Coolidge was invited by President Harding to attend cabinet meetings , making him the first vice president to do so . He gave a number of unremarkable speeches around the country .

As the U.S. vice president , Coolidge and his vivacious wife Grace were invited to quite a few parties , where the legend of " Silent Cal " was born . It is from this time that most of the jokes and anecdotes involving Coolidge originate . Although Coolidge was known to be a skilled and effective public speaker , in private he was a man of few words and was commonly referred to as " Silent Cal " . A possibly apocryphal story has it a matron , seated next to him at a dinner , said to him , " I made a bet today that I could get more than two words out of you . " He replied , " You lose . " Dorothy Parker , upon learning that Coolidge had died , reportedly remarked , " How can they tell ? " Coolidge often seemed uncomfortable among fashionable Washington society ; when asked why he continued to attend so many of their dinner parties , he replied , " Got to eat somewhere . " Alice Roosevelt Longworth , a leading Republican wit , underscored Coolidge 's silence and his dour personality : " When he wished he were elsewhere , he pursed his lips , folded his arms , and said nothing . He looked then precisely as though he had been weaned on a pickle . "

As president , Coolidge 's reputation as a quiet man continued . " The words of a President have an enormous weight , " he would later write , " and ought not to be used indiscriminately . " Coolidge was aware of his stiff reputation ; indeed , he cultivated it . " I think the American people want a solemn ass as a President , " he once told Ethel Barrymore , " and I think I will go along with them . " Some historians would later suggest that Coolidge 's image was created deliberately as a campaign tactic , while others believe his withdrawn and quiet behavior to be natural , deepening after the death of his son in 1924 .

= = Presidency (1923 ? 29) = =

= = = Succession to the presidency = = =

On August 2 , 1923 , President Harding died suddenly in San Francisco while on a speaking tour of the western United States . Vice President Coolidge was in Vermont visiting his family home , which

had neither electricity nor a telephone , when he received word by messenger of Harding 's death . He dressed , said a prayer , and came downstairs to greet the reporters who had assembled . His father , a notary public , administered the oath of office in the family 's parlor by the light of a kerosene lamp at 2 : 47 a.m. on August 3 , 1923 ; President Coolidge then went back to bed . He returned to Washington the next day , and was sworn in again by Justice Adolph A. Hoehling Jr. of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia , to forestall any questions about the authority of a notary public to administer the presidential oath .

= = First term , 1923 ? 1925 = =

The nation initially did not know what to make of Coolidge , who had maintained a low profile in the Harding administration ; many had even expected him to be replaced on the ballot in 1924 . He appointed C. Bascom Slessom , a Virginia Congressman and experienced federal politician , to work jointly with Edward T. Clark , a Massachusetts Republican organizer whom he retained from his vice @-@ presidential staff , as Secretaries to the President (a position equivalent to the modern White House Chief of Staff) .

Although a few of Harding 's cabinet appointees were scandal @-@ tarred , Coolidge retained all of them , out of an ardent conviction that as successor to a deceased elected president he was obligated to retain Harding 's counselors and policies until the next election . (He did replace Harding 's speechwriter Judson T. Welliver with Jordan A. Hulseberg , whom he felt would better reflect his more reserved personality .) Coolidge strongly felt that those of Harding 's men under suspicion were entitled to every presumption of innocence , taking a characteristically methodical approach to the scandals , principally the Teapot Dome scandal , while others clamored for rapid punishment of those they presumed guilty . Coolidge felt the Senate investigations of the scandals would suffice ; this was affirmed by the resulting resignations of those involved . He did personally intervene in demanding the resignation of Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty after he refused to cooperate with the congressional probe . He then set about to confirm that no loose ends remained in the administration , arranging for a full briefing on the wrongdoing . Harry A. Slattery reviewed the facts with him , Harlan F. Stone analyzed the legal aspects for him and Senator William E. Borah assessed and presented the political factors .

Coolidge addressed Congress when it reconvened on December 6 , 1923 , giving a speech that supported many of Harding 's policies , including Harding 's formal budgeting process , the enforcement of immigration restrictions and arbitration of coal strikes ongoing in Pennsylvania . Coolidge 's speech was the first presidential speech to be broadcast over the radio . The Washington Naval Treaty was proclaimed just one month into Coolidge 's term , and was generally well received in the country . In May 1924 , the World War I veterans ' World War Adjusted Compensation Act or " Bonus Bill " was passed over his veto . Coolidge signed the Immigration Act later that year , which was aimed at restricting southern and eastern European immigration , but appended a signing statement expressing his unhappiness with the bill 's specific exclusion of Japanese immigrants . Just before the Republican Convention began , Coolidge signed into law the Revenue Act of 1924 , which reduced the top marginal tax rate from 58 % to 46 % , as well as personal income tax rates across the board , increased the estate tax and bolstered it with a new gift tax .

On June 2 , 1924 Coolidge signed the act granting citizenship to all Native Americans born in the United States . By that time , two @-@ thirds of the people were already citizens , having gained it through marriage , military service (veterans of World War I were granted citizenship in 1919) , or the land allotments that had earlier taken place .

= = = 1924 election = = =

The Republican Convention was held on June 10 ? 12 , 1924 , in Cleveland , Ohio ; Coolidge was nominated on the first ballot . The convention nominated Frank Lowden of Illinois for vice president on the second ballot , but he declined ; former Brigadier General Charles G. Dawes was nominated

on the third ballot and accepted .

The Democrats held their convention the next month in New York City . The convention soon deadlocked , and after 103 ballots , the delegates finally agreed on a compromise candidate , John W. Davis , with Charles W. Bryan nominated for vice president . The Democrats ' hopes were buoyed when Robert M. La Follette Sr. , a Republican Senator from Wisconsin , split from the GOP to form a new Progressive Party . Many believed that the split in the Republican party , like the one in 1912 , would allow a Democrat to win the presidency .

After the conventions and the death of his younger son Calvin , Coolidge became withdrawn ; he later said that " when he [the son] died , the power and glory of the Presidency went with him . " Even as he mourned , Coolidge ran his standard campaign , not mentioning his opponents by name or maligning them , and delivering speeches on his theory of government , including several that were broadcast over radio . It was the most subdued campaign since 1896 , partly because of Coolidge 's grief , but also because of his naturally non @-@ confrontational style . The other candidates campaigned in a more modern fashion , but despite the split in the Republican party , the results were similar to those of 1920 . Coolidge and Dawes won every state outside the South except Wisconsin , La Follette 's home state . Coolidge won the popular vote by 2 @.@ 5 million over his opponents ' combined total .

= = Second term , 1925 ? 1929 = =

= = = Industry and trade = = =

During Coolidge 's presidency , the United States experienced a period of rapid economic growth known as the " Roaring Twenties . " He left the administration 's industrial policy in the hands of his activist Secretary of Commerce , Herbert Hoover , who energetically used government auspices to promote business efficiency and develop airlines and radio . Coolidge disdained regulation , and demonstrated this by appointing commissioners to the Federal Trade Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission who did little to restrict the activities of businesses under their jurisdiction . The regulatory state under Coolidge was , as one biographer described it , " thin to the point of invisibility . "

Coolidge 's economic policy has often been misquoted as " generally speaking , the business of the American people is business " (full quotation at right) . Some have criticized Coolidge as an adherent of the laissez @-@ faire ideology , which they claim led to the Great Depression . On the other hand , historian Robert Sobel offers some context based on Coolidge 's sense of federalism : " As Governor of Massachusetts , Coolidge supported wages and hours legislation , opposed child labor , imposed economic controls during World War I , favored safety measures in factories , and even worker representation on corporate boards . Did he support these measures while president ? No , because in the 1920s , such matters were considered the responsibilities of state and local governments . "

= = = Taxation and government spending = = =

Coolidge 's taxation policy was that of his Secretary of the Treasury , Andrew Mellon , the ideal that " scientific taxation " ?? lower taxes ?? actually increase rather than decrease government receipts . Congress agreed , and the taxes were reduced in Coolidge 's term . In addition to these tax cuts , Coolidge proposed reductions in federal expenditures and retiring some of the federal debt . Coolidge 's ideas were shared by the Republicans in Congress , and in 1924 , Congress passed the Revenue Act of 1924 , which reduced income tax rates and eliminated all income taxation for some two million people . They reduced taxes again by passing the Revenue Acts of 1926 and 1928 , all the while continuing to keep spending down so as to reduce the overall federal debt . By 1927 , only the wealthiest 2 % of taxpayers paid any federal income tax . Federal spending remained flat during Coolidge 's administration , allowing one @-@ fourth of the federal debt to be retired in total . State

and local governments saw considerable growth , however , surpassing the federal budget in 1927 .

== Opposition to farm subsidies ==

Perhaps the most contentious issue of Coolidge 's presidency was relief for farmers . Some in Congress proposed a bill designed to fight falling agricultural prices by allowing the federal government to purchase crops to sell abroad at lower prices . Agriculture Secretary Henry C. Wallace and other administration officials favored the bill when it was introduced in 1924 , but rising prices convinced many in Congress that the bill was unnecessary , and it was defeated just before the elections that year . In 1926 , with farm prices falling once more , Senator Charles L. McNary and Representative Gilbert N. Haugen ? both Republicans ? proposed the McNary ? Haugen Farm Relief Bill . The bill proposed a federal farm board that would purchase surplus production in high @-@ yield years and hold it (when feasible) for later sale or sell it abroad . Coolidge opposed McNary @-@ Haugen , declaring that agriculture must stand " on an independent business basis , " and said that " government control cannot be divorced from political control . " Instead of manipulating prices , he favored instead Herbert Hoover 's proposal to create profits by modernizing agriculture . Secretary Mellon wrote a letter denouncing the McNary @-@ Haugen measure as unsound and likely to cause inflation , and it was defeated .

After McNary @-@ Haugen 's defeat , Coolidge supported a less radical measure , the Curtis @-@ Crisp Act , which would have created a federal board to lend money to farm co @-@ operatives in times of surplus ; the bill did not pass . In February 1927 , Congress took up the McNary @-@ Haugen bill again , this time narrowly passing it , and Coolidge vetoed it . In his veto message , he expressed the belief that the bill would do nothing to help farmers , benefiting only exporters and expanding the federal bureaucracy . Congress did not override the veto , but it passed the bill again in May 1928 by an increased majority ; again , Coolidge vetoed it . " Farmers never have made much money , " said Coolidge , the Vermont farmer 's son . " I do not believe we can do much about it . "

== Flood control ==

Coolidge has often been criticized for his actions during the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 , the worst natural disaster to hit the Gulf Coast until Hurricane Katrina in 2005 . Although he did eventually name Secretary Hoover to a commission in charge of flood relief , scholars argue that Coolidge overall showed a lack of interest in federal flood control . Coolidge did not believe that personally visiting the region after the floods would accomplish anything , and that it would be seen as mere political grandstanding . He also did not want to incur the federal spending that flood control would require ; he believed property owners should bear much of the cost . On the other hand , Congress wanted a bill that would place the federal government completely in charge of flood mitigation . When Congress passed a compromise measure in 1928 , Coolidge declined to take credit for it and signed the bill in private on May 15 .

== Civil rights ==

Coolidge spoke in favor of the civil rights of African @-@ Americans , saying in his first State of the Union address that the rights of the former were " just as sacred as those of any other citizen " under the U.S. Constitution and that it was a " public and a private duty to protect those rights . " He appointed no known members of the Ku Klux Klan to office ; indeed , the Klan lost most of its influence during his term . His administration commissioned studies to improve programs for Native Americans .

Coolidge repeatedly called for laws to prohibit lynching , saying in his 1923 State of the Union address that it was a " hideous crime " of which African @-@ Americans were " by no means the sole sufferers , " but consisted of the " majority of the victims . " However , most Congressional attempts to pass this legislation were filibustered by Southern Democrats . Coolidge appointed some

African @-@ Americans to federal office ; he retained Harding 's choice of Walter L. Cohen of New Orleans , Louisiana , as the comptroller of customs and offered Cohen the post of minister to Liberia , which the businessman declined .

On June 2 , 1924 , Coolidge signed the Indian Citizenship Act , which granted U.S. citizenship to all American Indians , while permitting them to retain tribal land and cultural rights . However , the act was unclear on whether the federal government or the tribal leaders retained tribal sovereignty . His administration appointed the Committee of One Hundred , a reform panel to examine federal institutions and programs dealing with Indian nations . This committee recommended that the government conduct an in @-@ depth investigation into reservation life (health , education , economics , justice , civil rights , etc .) . This was commissioned through the Department of Interior and conducted by the Brookings Institution , resulting in the groundbreaking Meriam Report of 1928 .

A few days later , on June 6 , 1924 , Coolidge delivered a commencement address at Washington , D.C. ' s Howard University , in which he thanked and commended African @-@ Americans for their rapid advances in education and their contributions to U.S. society over the years , as well as their eagerness to render their services as soldiers in World War I , all while being faced with discrimination and prejudices at home :

The propaganda of prejudice and hatred which sought to keep the colored men from supporting the national cause completely failed . The black man showed himself the same kind of citizen , moved by the same kind of patriotism , as the white man . They were tempted , but not one betrayed his country They came home with many decorations and their conduct repeatedly won high commendation from both American and European commanders No part of the community responded more willingly , more generously , more unqualifiedly , to the demand for special extraordinary exertion , than did the members of the Negro race . Whether in the military service , or in the vast mobilization of industrial resources which the war required , the Negro did his part precisely as did the white man . He drew no color line when patriotism made its call upon him . He gave precisely as his white fellow citizens gave , to the limit of resources and abilities , to help the general cause . Thus the American Negro established his right to the gratitude and appreciation which the Nation has been glad to accord .

In August 1924 , Coolidge responded to a letter from a New York man claiming that the United States was a " white man 's country " and that African @-@ Americans should therefore not be allowed to hold elected office . Echoing his June 1924 speech at Howard University , Coolidge refuted the man 's statement , saying that African @-@ Americans were " just as truly citizens " of the United States " as are any others , " and commended the service of black U.S. soldiers during World War I :

I was amazed to receive such a letter . During the war 500 @,@ 000 colored men and boys were called up under the draft , not one of whom sought to evade it . [As president , I am] one who feels a responsibility for living up to the traditions and maintaining the principles of the Republican Party . Our Constitution guarantees equal rights to all our citizens , without discrimination on account of race or color . I have taken my oath to support that Constitution . It is the source of your rights and my rights . I propose to regard it , and administer it , as the source of the rights of all the people , whatever their belief or race . A colored man is precisely as much entitled to submit his candidacy in a party primary , as is any other citizen . The decision must be made by the constituents to whom he offers himself , and by nobody else .

Speaking before a group of naturalized Americans of European background at the White House in October 1924 , Coolidge stressed tolerance of differences as an American value and thanked immigrants for their contributions to U.S. society , saying that they have " contributed much to making our country what it is . " He stated that although the diversity of peoples was a detrimental source of conflict and tension in Europe , it was peculiar for the United States that it was a " harmonious " benefit for the country . Coolidge further stated the United States should assist and help immigrants who come to the country , and urged immigrants to reject " race hatreds " and " prejudices " :

Among these I should place , first , the broadly tolerant attitude that has been a characteristic of this

country . I use the word in its most inclusive sense , to cover tolerance of religious opinion , tolerance in politics , tolerance in social relationships ; in general , the liberal attitude of every citizen toward his fellows As a Nation , our first duty must be to those who are already our inhabitants , whether native or immigrants . To them we owe an especial and a weighty obligation . They came to us with stout hearts and high hopes of bettering their estate . They have contributed much to making our country what it is They cannot help other nations by bringing old world race prejudices and race hatreds into action here . In fact , they can best help other countries by scrupulously avoiding any such motives .

In December 1924 , Coolidge delivered his second State of the Union address , in which he commended African @-@ Americans for their advances , and stressed that their constitutional rights should be respected and protected :

These developments have brought about a very remarkable improvement in the condition of the negro race . Gradually , but surely , with the almost universal sympathy of those among whom they live , the colored people are working out their own destiny . I firmly believe that it is better for all concerned that they should be cheerfully accorded their full constitutional rights , that they should be protected from all of those impositions to which , from their position , they naturally fall a prey , especially from the crime of lynching and that they should receive every encouragement to become full partakers in all the blessings of our common American citizenship .

In a May 1926 speech delivered at Arlington to commemorate the U.S. military , Coolidge praised the linguistic , ethnic , and religious diversity of the U.S. population , citing it as an example of American exceptionalism . He spoke out against " race hatred " and " religious intolerance , " saying that engaging in such actions would be an " injury " and not a " benefit " to the country :

We are situated differently in this respect from any other country . All the other great powers have a comparatively homogeneous population , close kindred in race and blood and speech , and commonly little divided in religious beliefs . Our great Nation is made up of the strong and virile pioneering stock of nearly all the countries of the world . We have a variety of race and language and religious belief race hatred , religious intolerance , and disregard of equal rights ... are ... a positive injury .

= = = Foreign policy = = =

Although not an isolationist , Coolidge was reluctant to enter into foreign alliances . He considered the 1920 Republican victory as a rejection of the Wilsonian position that the United States should join the League of Nations . While not completely opposed to the idea , Coolidge believed the League , as then constituted , did not serve American interests , and he did not advocate membership . He spoke in favor of the United States joining the Permanent Court of International Justice (World Court) , provided that the nation would not be bound by advisory decisions . In 1926 , the Senate eventually approved joining the Court (with reservations) . The League of Nations accepted the reservations , but it suggested some modifications of its own . The Senate failed to act ; the United States never joined the World Court .

Coolidge 's primary initiative was the Kellogg ? Briand Pact of 1928 , named for Coolidge 's Secretary of State , Frank B. Kellogg , and French foreign minister Aristide Briand . The treaty , ratified in 1929 , committed signatories ? the United States , the United Kingdom , France , Germany , Italy , and Japan ? to " renounce war , as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another . " The treaty did not achieve its intended result ? the outlawry of war ? but it did provide the founding principle for international law after World War II .

Coolidge continued the previous administration 's policy of withholding recognition of the Soviet Union . He also continued the United States ' support for the elected government of Mexico against the rebels there , lifting the arms embargo on that country . He sent Dwight Morrow to Mexico as the American ambassador .

The United States ' occupation of Nicaragua and Haiti continued under his administration , but Coolidge withdrew American troops from the Dominican Republic in 1924 . Coolidge led the U.S. delegation to the Sixth International Conference of American States , January 15 ? 17 , 1928 , in

Havana , Cuba . This was the only international trip Coolidge made during his presidency . There , he extend an olive branch to Latin American leaders embittered over America 's interventionist policies in Central America and the Caribbean . For 88 years he was the only sitting president to have visited Cuba , until Barack Obama did so in 2016 .

= = = 1928 election = = =

In the summer of 1927 , Coolidge vacationed in the Black Hills of South Dakota , where he engaged in horseback riding and fly fishing and attended rodeos . He made Custer State Park his " summer White House . " While on vacation , Coolidge surprisingly issued a terse statement that he would not seek a second full term as president : " I do not choose to run for President in 1928 . " After allowing the reporters to take that in , Coolidge elaborated . " If I take another term , I will be in the White House till 1933 ? Ten years in Washington is longer than any other man has had it ? too long ! " In his memoirs , Coolidge explained his decision not to run : " The Presidential office takes a heavy toll of those who occupy it and those who are dear to them . While we should not refuse to spend and be spent in the service of our country , it is hazardous to attempt what we feel is beyond our strength to accomplish . " After leaving office , he and Grace returned to Northampton , where he wrote his memoirs . The Republicans retained the White House in 1928 in the person of Coolidge 's Secretary of Commerce , Herbert Hoover . Coolidge had been reluctant to endorse Hoover as his successor ; on one occasion he remarked that " for six years that man has given me unsolicited advice ? all of it bad . " Even so , Coolidge had no desire to split the party by publicly opposing the nomination of the popular commerce secretary .

= = = Cabinet = = =

= = = Judicial appointments = = =

Coolidge appointed one justice to the Supreme Court of the United States , Harlan Fiske Stone in 1925 . Stone was Coolidge 's fellow Amherst alumnus , a Wall Street lawyer and conservative Republican . Stone was serving as dean of Columbia Law School when Coolidge appointed him to be attorney general in 1924 to restore the reputation tarnished by Harding 's Attorney General , Harry M. Daugherty . Stone proved to be a firm believer in judicial restraint and was regarded as one of the court 's three liberal justices who would often vote to uphold New Deal legislation . President Franklin D. Roosevelt later appointed Stone to be chief justice .

Coolidge nominated 17 judges to the United States Courts of Appeals , and 61 judges to the United States district courts . He appointed judges to various specialty courts as well , including Genevieve R. Cline , who became the first woman named to the federal judiciary when Coolidge placed her on the United States Customs Court in 1928 . Coolidge also signed the Judiciary Act of 1925 into law , allowing the Supreme Court more discretion over its workload .

= = Retirement and death = =

After his presidency , Coolidge retired to the modest rented house on residential Massasoit Street in Northampton before moving to a more spacious home , " The Beeches . " He kept a Hacker runabout boat on the Connecticut River and was often observed on the water by local boating enthusiasts . During this period , he also served as chairman of the non @-@ partisan Railroad Commission , as honorary president of the American Foundation for the Blind , as a director of New York Life Insurance Company , as president of the American Antiquarian Society , and as a trustee of Amherst College . Coolidge received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Bates College in Lewiston , Maine .

Coolidge published his autobiography in 1929 and wrote a syndicated newspaper column , " Calvin Coolidge Says , " from 1930 to 1931 . Faced with looming defeat in the 1932 presidential election ,

some Republicans spoke of rejecting Herbert Hoover as their party 's nominee , and instead drafting Coolidge to run , but the former president made it clear that he was not interested in running again , and that he would publicly repudiate any effort to draft him , should it come about . Hoover was renominated , and Coolidge made several radio addresses in support of him . Hoover then lost the general election to Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt in a landslide .

He died suddenly from coronary thrombosis at " The Beeches , " at 12 : 45 p.m. , January 5 , 1933 . Shortly before his death , Coolidge confided to an old friend : " I feel I no longer fit in with these times . " Coolidge is buried beneath a simple headstone in Plymouth Notch Cemetery , Plymouth Notch , Vermont , where the nearby family home is maintained as one of the original buildings on the Calvin Coolidge Homestead District site . The State of Vermont dedicated a new visitors ' center nearby to mark Coolidge 's 100th birthday on July 4 , 1972 .

= = Radio , film , and commemorations = =

Despite his reputation as a quiet and even reclusive politician , Coolidge made use of the new medium of radio and made radio history several times while president . He made himself available to reporters , giving 520 press conferences , meeting with reporters more regularly than any president before or since . Coolidge 's second inauguration was the first presidential inauguration broadcast on radio . On December 6 , 1923 , he was the first president whose address to Congress was broadcast on radio . Coolidge signed the Radio Act of 1927 , which assigned regulation of radio to the newly created Federal Radio Commission . On August 11 , 1924 , Theodore W. Case , using the Phonofilm sound @-@ on @-@ film process he developed for Lee DeForest , filmed Coolidge on the White House lawn , making Coolidge the first president to appear in a sound film . The title of the DeForest film was President Coolidge , Taken on the White House Grounds . When Charles Lindbergh arrived in Washington on a U.S. navy ship after his celebrated 1927 trans @-@ Atlantic flight , President Coolidge welcomed him back to the U.S. and a sound @-@ on @-@ film record of the event exists . Coolidge was the only president to have his portrait on a coin during his lifetime , the Sesquicentennial of American Independence Half Dollar , minted in 1926 . After his death he also appeared on a postage stamp , pictured below .

= = Legacy = =

U.S. President Ronald W. Reagan regarded Coolidge as his favorite 20th @-@ century U.S. president because of Coolidge 's belief in a more limited U.S. federal government . Reagan cited Coolidge 's tough handling of striking Boston police when he fired striking air traffic controllers in 1981 . Coolidge 's reputation remains strong among most political conservatives .

The Coolidge effect , whereby males (and to a lesser extent females) exhibit renewed sexual interest if introduced to new receptive sexual partners , even after refusing sex from prior but still available sexual partners , is named after the former president . Behavioral endocrinologist Frank A. Beach first mentioned the term " Coolidge effect " in publication in 1955 , crediting one of his students with suggesting the term at a psychology conference . He attributed the neologism to :

an old joke about Calvin Coolidge when he was President ? The President and Mrs. Coolidge were being shown (separately) around an experimental government farm . When [Mrs. Coolidge] came to the chicken yard she noticed that a rooster was mating very frequently . She asked the attendant how often that happened and was told , " Dozens of times each day . " Mrs. Coolidge said , " Tell that to the President when he comes by . " Upon being told , the President asked , " Same hen every time ? " The reply was , " Oh , no , Mr. President , a different hen every time . " President : " Tell that to Mrs. Coolidge . "