

MR. COOLIDGE IS LEARNING TO PLAY: Fishing Takes Its Place Alongside ...

By CHARLES R. MICHAELPAUL SMITH'S, N. Y.

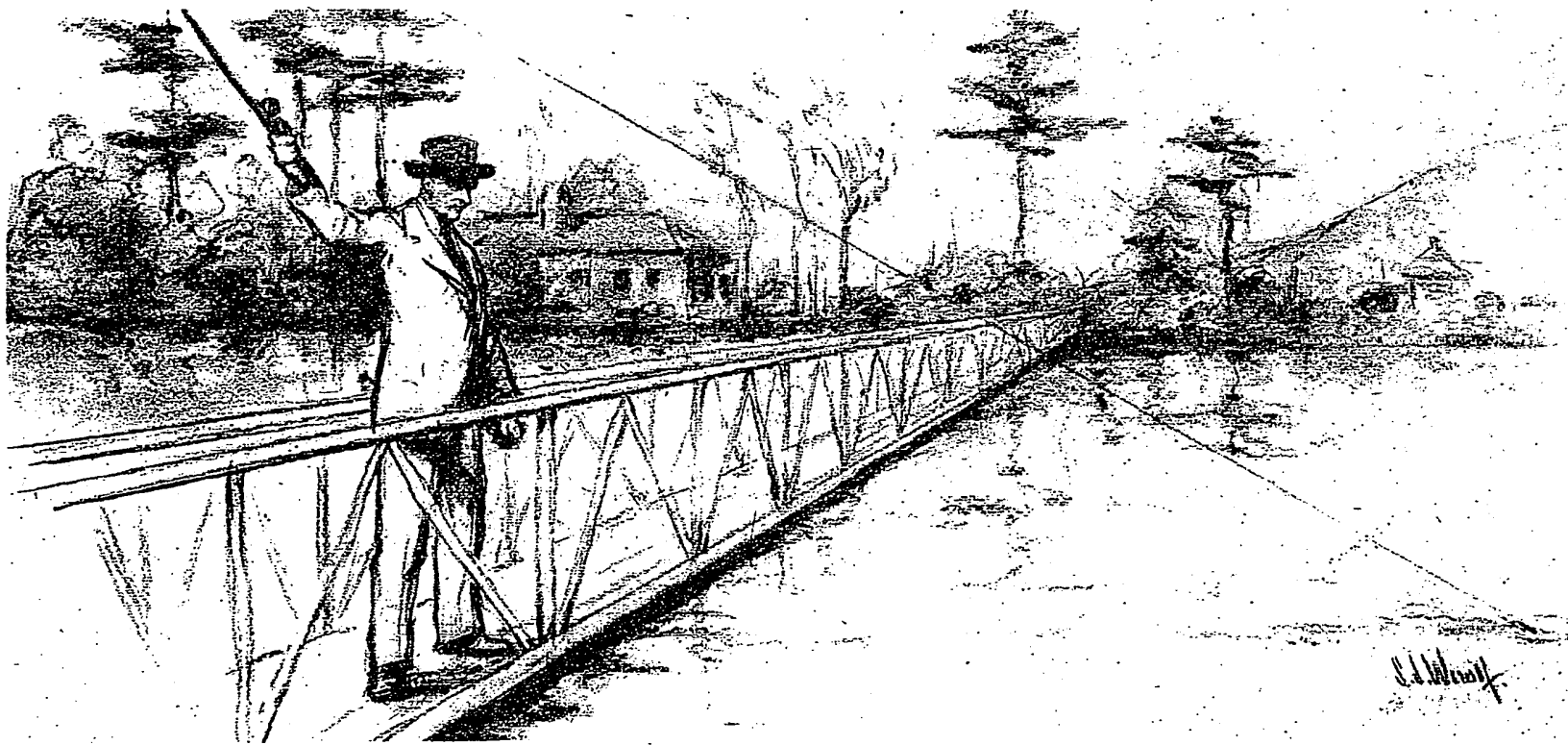
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MR. COOLIDGE IS LEARNING TO PLAY

Fishing Takes Its Place Alongside Politics at the Summer White House in Adirondacks—President Becomes Interested in Woodlore But Is Keeping in Close Touch With Outside Affairs



The President Tries to Land Another One on Lake Osgood.
The First Sketches of the President Fishing—Made With His Permission.

By CHARLES R. MICHAEL

PAUL SMITH'S, N. Y.

HERE, five hundred miles from Washington, and not far from the Canadian border, the White House has been transplanted. Never before has the Summer capital been set up so far from Pennsylvania Avenue, and yet, from here, the affairs of the Government are conducted without interruption and with a touch almost as intimate as that given them in Washington.

possible luxury in primitive surroundings. Here the President and Mrs. Coolidge are in a spot superbly suited for a vacation free from social duties and such demands as are imposed upon them by White House visitors, who sometimes number 500 a day.

Yet, despite his isolation, the President is in as instant touch with developments at home and abroad as he was in Washington. Nothing that would be brought to his attention by Cabinet officers and subordinates if he were at his desk in Washington escapes

him here in the fastness of the forest. A private telegraph line from the executive offices in Washington brings him a daily flow of messages. The executive offices on Lower St. Regis Lake are equipped with half a dozen telephone wires, and in five minutes the President can talk from his study to Washington or to any part of the country.

In the executive offices, a cozy, two-story cottage by the lakeside, one finds the same faces as at Washington. On the first floor

is a reception room, where Patrick McKenna presides; across the hall is the President's office, containing an open fireplace, a heavy oak desk and a number of comfortable chairs. Other offices are on the same floor. Above, on the second floor, Everett Sanders, secretary to the President, has his offices, and near him are the clerks and stenographers and Edward T. Clark, private secretary to the President. The telephone and telegraph offices are also here.

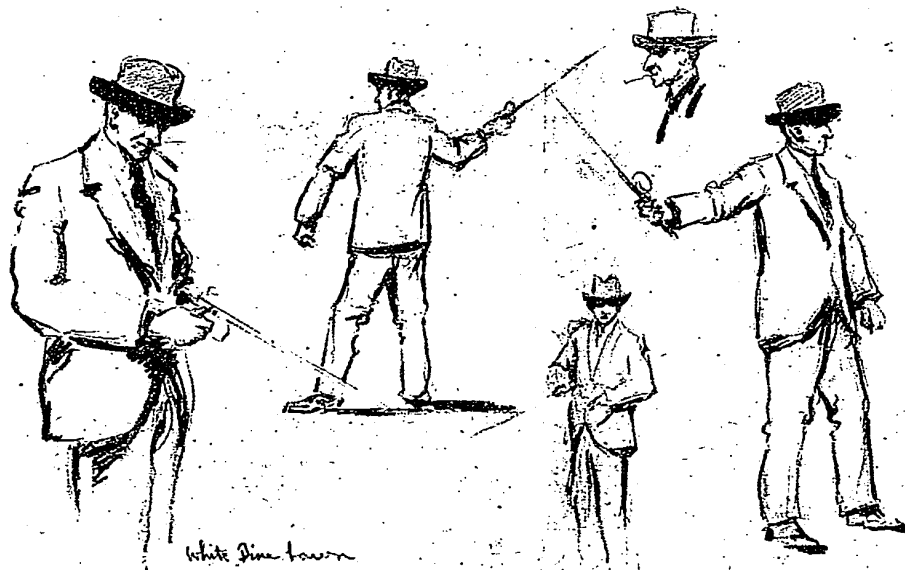
Two White House telegraphers sit at the

Remove the setting and the scene might be enacted in Washington, for the cast is identical. Against this Adirondack background are placed the same people who were seen a month ago at the executive offices—the secretaries, the clerks, the Secret Service men, the doorkeepers, the telegraph operators and all the rest.

And so the visitor is reminded that the work of Government goes on, even in such primeval woodland as this. For, as President of the United States, Mr. Coolidge cannot enjoy the usual vacation, a complete respite from work. He is working hard in this mountain camp, but—and this is the significant thing—he is also playing hard.

On former vacations the responsibilities of his office seemed to rest heavily upon the President, and he showed no desire for diversion. But now there appears to have awakened in him an interest in outdoor recreation and he seems to be intent upon getting out of this rest as much as it can hold.

The Coolidge camp on Lake Osgood, a sheet of water cut off from the chain of other lakes in this section of the Adirondacks, affords all



Thumb-Nail Sketches of the President as a Disciple of Izaak Walton.

key, while another White House attaché operates the telephone board. One sees no difference in the routine of the executive offices here and in Washington; the secretaries and subordinates work just as long hours as ever, and sometimes longer, as the entire force remains on duty until President Coolidge informs Secretary Sanders that he has returned to his cabin after a fishing or automobile trip.

The telephone board is active twenty-four hours. From the executive offices the President's camp is connected with a dozen or more telephones. The President can be reached no matter where he is in his large domain. The Secret Service stations have telephones connected with the executive offices, while the marine camp also keeps in touch. Ten marines guard the camp night and day, and three Secret Service men supplement them in protecting the President.

President Coolidge has not varied in his personal habits during his vacation. He gets up about 7 o'clock, usually takes a long walk and an hour later breakfast is served. This meal is a substantial one, consisting



Mrs. Coolidge at the Camp.

himself, as his afternoon correspondence is not presented to him until about 5 o'clock. Lunch is at 1 o'clock, and, following his habit of keeping himself in good mental and physical condition, the President usually sleeps an hour after his mid-day meal. About 2:30 the afternoon fishing expeditions, walks or automobile trips are taken. The President tries to return from these by 5:30 or 6 o'clock, so as to accommodate himself to his office forces. When he goes a long distance, such as into the preserves originally owned by William Rockefeller, he sometimes does not return to camp until 7 o'clock. He is most methodical in his diversions as well as in his administrative duties, and late excursions are infrequent.

A Skillful Fisherman

The President's program of work and diversion continues the same each day. Sometimes he fishes only once, but nearly every day thus far he has tried his hand at casting twice. Apparently he wants to become an adept fisherman, and his guides say that he is learning to cast very skillfully and throw the heavy plugger for pike with ease.

The cottage which serves as the Summer White House is two or three miles from the camp, and it is at the cottage that the President receives

walks into the largest room and stands behind a desk in front of a large bay window. Here he confers with the correspondents, answering their written questions. The routine is similar to that followed at the White House.

The camp itself consists of a number of separate houses, each one almost hidden from the other by dense foliage, but connected by soft paths. They are all on top of the hill, at the foot of which is a dock and a long wooden bridge spanning a small inlet to another point of land.

It is here that Mr. Coolidge does much of his fishing. Among the guides there is a feeling that he knows much more about it than he acknowledges. They say that from the way he handles the rod he must have done considerable fishing before, and probably he has boyhood memories of the pools and streams of Vermont.

Mrs. Coolidge is said to be much pleased with the way the President is broadening his exercise. She is not in agreement with the theory that morning and evening walks are sufficient to keep her husband in condition. This is all he did for exercise in Washington, except an occasional morning ride on his electric horse. He never plays golf, and

biography—have been forsaken thus far for fishing. But there are plenty of rainy days, besides nights, for reading, and in the end he may get in his usual Summer reading while on his holiday in the woods.

The political prognosticators, many of them gloomy as to the President's future and that of the party, have not disturbed his customary calm. If he is devoting any thought to 1924 or the uncertainties of Republican control of the next Senate as the outcome of the Fall elections, he is not showing it in his talks. There is every evidence that he is giving himself up to a real rest.

President Coolidge is making up for many lost years—for vacations devoid of the play that fortifies a hard-working man for his tasks in the winter. He has never learned to play, but he is doing it now. Mrs. Coolidge and those about him hope that he will soon drop work for nothing but rest and play in the outdoors. They want him to forget work, to put aside the nation's business for the time being and to get all the good he can out of life in the mountains.

As a handicap to this program Mr. Coolidge has very little play in him. From his youth in Vermont, and all through his life, he has been accustomed to the serious side—to work and unremitting application to those things that make for improvement.

Late in life, when he came to a position in which he could take time for a vacation, he did not know how to enjoy the diversions of such idleness.

Why He Never Golfed

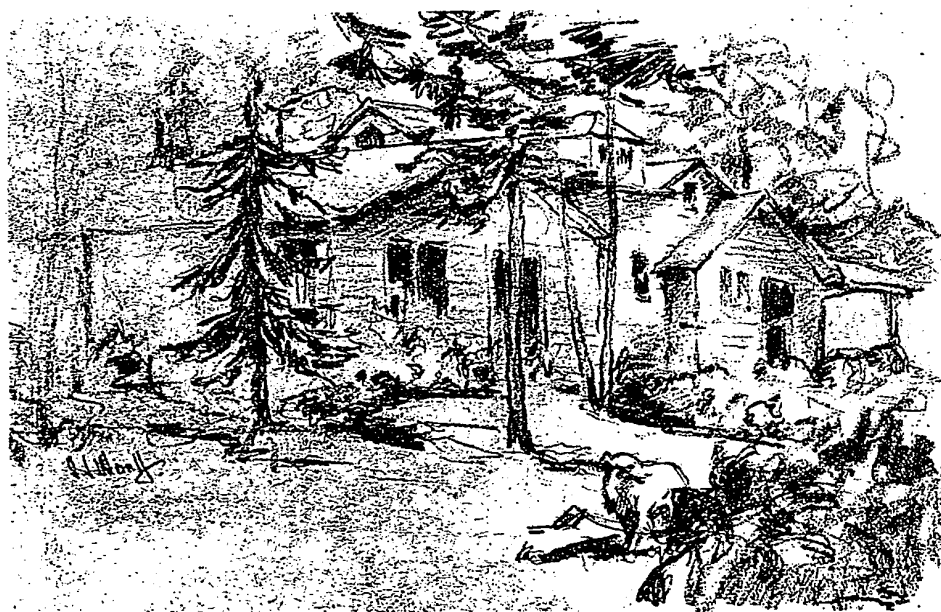
As has been noted, President Coolidge never became interested in golf. He does not ride horseback, although the White House stables have plenty of good saddle horses. He has preferred walking. Now he has added fishing, and he may expand his diversions by taking long rides over the mountain trails or perhaps he will climb St. Regis, facing his cabin.

Discussing golf and other forms of play the other day, Mr. Coolidge summed up his case by saying: "Before coming to Washington I was too poor to play, and now I haven't the time."

Mrs. Coolidge has not yet taken part in the sporting life of the camp. Through Mrs. Alfred E. Smith, wife of the Governor, a New York State



The Summer White House.



The Main Cabin.

the newspaper correspondents, for he has made it a rule that his camp shall have complete privacy.

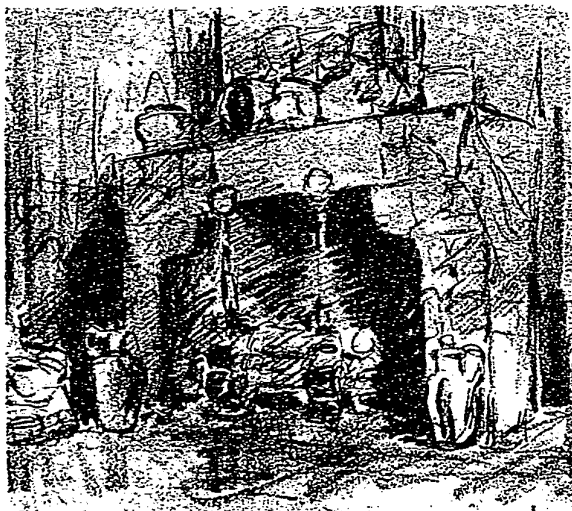
On certain days the former living room becomes the waiting room for the correspondents. The Presidential car arrives and the President goes upstairs to Secretary Sanders's office. Outside Summer visitors begin to gather, for from the roadway the oak of the President's head can be seen in the upper room. After many false alarms the President at last descends. Papers in his hands, tortoiseshell spectacles on his nose, he

while on vacation followed his old habit until this year. He is taking up his new hobby with the eagerness of a child getting a new toy, and is represented as fully appreciative now of the advantages of fishing—the excitement and complete mental rest that it offers.

Gradually the President is slipping into the vacation class, but from all indications is doing so without neglecting his work. The hooks that have always hitherto occupied his attention while on a vacation—the reading of American history and

fishing license was sent to her, but the President's wife has not taken advantage of it to try her luck with the trout and bass of Lake Osgood and neighboring waters. She strolls about the grounds of the camp when inclination seizes her, and generally the two white collies go with her. Sometimes she walks as far as the lodge gates, where there is an Alpine rock garden containing sixty-three varieties of Alpine and wild flowers, a garden pronounced by

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The Fireplace in the Large Living Room.

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experts as one of the most complete of its kind.

Mrs. Coolidge is ready for breakfast at 8 o'clock. The florist already has brought the day's supply of cut flowers, which are arranged on the breakfast table and about the cabin by the time the President returns from his morning walk. After breakfast Mrs. Coolidge reads the morning newspapers, and then with the housekeeper plans the meals for the rest of the day. The President's wife is no different from the average American housewife in that she keeps in direct touch with the kitchen and the domestic side of the household.

Afternoons are spent with the President or in reading and with keeping up with her correspondence. Since she came here Mrs. Coolidge has been quite busy with acknowledgments of small gifts that have been sent to her, such as, for instance, bird seed for the four canaries brought from the White House. The President's wife, too, has received hundreds of things for outdoor use—fishing tackle and rods, tramping shoes and woolen skirts and knickers.

As wife of the President, Mrs. Coolidge also finds her duties as a hostess cannot be divorced from camp life. Already the conferences and week-end visits which will become more numerous as the vacation progresses have started. It appears likely that before the Summer is over virtually all the President's official family will have been here, in addition to many Republican leaders.

The first few weeks of his vacation in the mountains, devoted to fishing and walks in the invigorating air, have had their effect upon the President. His nerves are stronger and outwardly he appears to be freed of a certain tenseness characteristic of him. He does not seem to be absorbed in deep thought, and has something of the abandon about him that should come with real relaxation. The cares of office do not show in the lines of his face. His complexion is tanned and ruddy and his step elastic. In fact, he has the air of a man on a care-free vacation, with the duties behind forgotten and those ahead not concerning him. If others in the Republican Party are worried, he is not. It may be that he has decided his political course in 1928 and, therefore, the future hangs easily on his shoulders. Perhaps his political philosophy has taught him how to face these problems with serenity.

Mr. Coolidge at Ease

In his relations with the press at the bi-weekly conferences, which have been continued on his vacation, Mr. Coolidge seems singularly free from political problems or the burdens of government. He is totally at ease and smiles at the questions placed before him in which gloomy forecasters predict defeat for the party in the Fall and the elimination of Mr. Coolidge from the Presidential race in 1928. If he is thinking of these things and of his chances of breaking the third term tradition, he keeps his own counsel and goes blithely afishing.

President Coolidge appears satisfied with the record of his party and himself in the last Congress. He has been in politics long enough to know that changes of feeling are often temporary. Therefore he is represented as not really concerned about the revolt against the Republican Party, also affecting himself, resulting from the failure of the last Congress to enact radical legislation to aid the farmer. The reverberations from the West, the reports that the Republican Party will lose the next Senate in the Fall elections—all these adverse reactions are not ignored by any means, but are analyzed by the President.

Indeed, Mr. Coolidge is accounted as good a student of the philosophy of politics as any man who has occupied his office before him for many years. He knows the political mind

and how to reach it, and feels that he can best strengthen his party and himself by doing his duty, irrespective of emotional movements. Tax reductions and keeping down the expenses of Government are his appeal, and therefore, the record having been made, Mr. Coolidge is represented as maintaining that nothing can be done now to satisfy the farm demands. Time, good weather that will produce bountiful crops and good prices for farm products, and general prosperity are the things that Mr. Coolidge and the party leaders are counting upon to remove the discontent and aid their cause in the Fall elections.

Today, with half of his administration about over, away from the smoky political atmosphere in this clear tonic air, the President gives an impression of self-confidence. A year ago Mr. Coolidge presented the picture of a man on trial with the public. Apparently he was then feeling his way to an understanding with the public and his party. Now he has the air of one who has won the approval of the people.

Family hopes to the contrary, the President's vacation will not be given up entirely to pleasure. Following his practice, he will keep in touch with politics and affairs. As the Summer wanes he will see the political leaders from different parts of the country so as to check his conclusions with the last reports from the actual battlefield. Cabinet

officers, party leaders and personal friends will be summoned to White Pine Camp to give Mr. Coolidge the benefit of their observations. These observations, it is said, will decide him on his course in the Fall elections—whether he ought to aid actively in the campaign or remain neutral and above political manoeuvres.

In the two months in the mountains he may reach two conclusions—one on the part he will play in the November elections, at which control of the next Senate is at stake; the other as to his attitude toward the nomination in 1928. But Mr. Coolidge has had too long an experience in public life to disclose his plans far in advance, since a disclosure would weaken him in his efforts to get his legislative program accepted by the next Congress.

Some say that the President is a sphinx in politics. He once said that he was not, but that the press had made him so because he did not talk loosely or readily. His reticence is an asset which has helped him on other occasions, so it is safe to say that President Coolidge will not be much different now when politicians and friends of prospective Presidential candidates are hopeful he will speak and open the 1928 race to others.

From present indications this so-called political sphinx may be expected to continue to keep his own counsel.