

## Raiding speakeasies in Philadelphia

Braidwood set off April 24, 1924. She took the back roads as much as possible to avoid the concrete thoroughfares that were hard on the horse's hooves. She carried her brother's raincoat, her sister's boots, her father's derby hat, a shawl, dress, pair of slippers and a couple changes of underwear. Also with her was a small Colt revolver.

In each community Braidwood was greeted by the mayor, to whom she extended an invitation to Belleville's festivities. For all but one night she stayed as the guest of local officials. In West Point, N.Y., every member of the cadet corps lined the street in pouring rain to see the young woman. In small communities schoolchildren turned out in droves. Her trip had been well publicized.

In Philadelphia she met General Smedley Butler who had been commander of the marines and was then leading an anti-crime unit there. The general asked what she was doing in the evening and then proposed she go with him for the night's work. She agreed to accompany him.

"So he road up with three car loads of police officers and we went raiding speakeasies," says Braidwood. "You should have seen them coming out the windows and doors," she says of the raids.

While on her way to lunch at the Yacht Club in Havre deGrasse, N.Y., a car pulled in front of her and blocked the road. Four or five men got out and came towards her so Braidwood pulled her revolver. They continued their advance so she shot one of the car's rear

### State troopers accompanied her

tires and put the spurs to Tip. It was the only time she used the spurs on the trip.

While still in New York State Braidwood was stopped by a man in an automobile wanting to wish her well. As he pulled near her another car clipped Tip's rear and the horse lurched forward into a fence. Braidwood flew over Tip's head onto the ground but neither horse nor rider were seriously injured. The well-wisher also told her she could have a state trooper escort while in New York State so Braidwood soon had company for the next while. Before leaving the state the troopers gave her a set of saddle bags.

When she arrived in Washington she went to the White House where she presented President Calvin Coolidge with Belleville's official invitation. Braidwood recalls the president wore a hat and because of his position, was not required by protocol to remove it in the presence of a lady. But everyone else on the journey had, therefore Tip took the President's hat in his teeth, removed it from Coolidge's head, and dropped it on the ground.

"I can still see Tip doing this — grabbing the brim of his hat and just dropping it," says Braidwood. Coolidge was unperturbed by the incident. Braidwood recalls the President was easy to speak with. By coincidence, the White House housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, was from Belleville and



Gwen Braidwood

this connection got Braidwood into the Oval Office. After meeting Coolidge she also gave an invitation to former president Taft and British ambassador Esme Howard.

Braidwood took a train home to be here in time for the celebrations. In sending Tip back by train she took special precautions to make the journey comfortable.

"I said, 'I want to send this horse to Canada but I don't want him crated.' And I slipped him \$10, which was a lot of money in those days." Tip arrived in Kingston 48 hours later in a large crate. When he was untied he collapsed from exhaustion but did recover. Five years later Braidwood visited the farm where Tip stayed. When she called to Tip, the horse immediately recognized her old travelling buddy and came galloping.

As far as the president goes, Coolidge didn't attend in Belleville, but he did send a representative.

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