



EULOGY FOR WILLIAM E. FINCH, Jr.

Originally published Spring/Summer 2001

by Jeffrey Bingham Mead

In September, 2000, one of our dearest and most respected family members passed away. William E. Finch, Jr., was a household name to many, serving as the town historian of Greenwich, Connecticut until his passing at age 89 years. Finch was one of the founders of the Historic Mead Family Burying Grounds Association. His experience and insights helped guide this association to become what it is today. This inaugural issue is dedicated to him as a token of our appreciation.

The following is a eulogy written by Association President Deacon Jeffrey Bingham Mead, and read at Finch's graveside service at the Middle Patent Rural Cemetery in North Castle, New York.

"He walked with God; and he was not; for God took him home." Genesis 5:24

This Old Testament passage is a sacred reminder that life is but the infancy of our existence, the dawn of the eternal day, the first step on the pathway of man's endless journey. This passage also reveals important truths, does it not? After all, our life and times are in God's loving hands, and there is an invisible existence after this life for the soul.

Today we bow our heads, united with heavy hearts, unencumbered by age or distance, to honor the life and legacy of William E. Finch, Jr. We loved this historian, genealogist, patriot, Yankee gentleman, and he was worthy of it. What a grand man he was! How like a brother, father, grandfather, and best friend he was to us all. Is there any surprise that we trod along like tired and weary children this autumn afternoon? Are our hearts not full of tears this day, providing firm testimony of the unalterable joy, blessedness, and love, which was his? Have any of us not quivered with remorse because we do not wish to be left alone by his absence? We are reminded that our broken hearts are very human indeed.

In all the work of Bill Finch's life with others there was never the shadow of discord or want of harmony. In our midst we were privileged to have a man who scattered innumerable kindnesses like raindrops on a warm, springtime morning. We all bore witness to his impressive force, deep sincerity, and affectionate warmth. To those in need his heart was a cornucopia of empathy and patience. His personal presence on our boards and committees, our winding stone wall-lined streets and country by-ways, in our homes and at our holiday tables was warm, congenial, and benevolent.

It is said that faith is a power through which we rise above fear and selfishness. Bill Finch's faith was alive and firm to the very end. Just as the river into the ocean flows so has the life of Bill Finch been uplifted and broadened into the higher and better life of the hereafter.

There is no joy like this, and there is no one like Bill Finch. In fellowship with God and us all was full of brightness and comfort. He entered into the ministry of preserving Greenwich's history not only with a definite aim, but also with the highest possible purpose. A life so abundant in labors will furnish memories, examples, and teachings as the days go on. Bill Finch illuminated the colors of our heritage and time like the vibrant autumn foliage soon upon us, like the stars in the sky above the New England landscape bursting at evening time in a firmament of glory. As we look at the grandeur of Bill Finch's time with us, though sad seems this day, we are filled with gratitude to God for sharing with us this extraordinary man of all seasons and centuries.