



ANNE FINCH

Countess of Winchilsea



Her Life & Times

1661-1720

Privileged & Educated

- Born into aristocracy
- Father suffered in Civil War
- Left money in will for her education
- Family emphasized female education
- Learned Classics, French, Italian, history, poetry & drama

- A view of Sydmonton, where Anne was born



Life at Court

□ Mary of Modena



- Family supported Stuarts
- Anne served as Maid of Honor to Mary of Modena, wife of Duke of York, future James II
- Met her husband at Court – Heneage Finch was Gentleman of the Bedchamber to James II
- It was a happy marriage

Political Turmoil

- Glorious, “Bloodless” Revolution, 1688 deposes James & Mary
- Heneage & Anne refuse to pledge allegiance to William & Mary
- Exiled to the country
- Heneage arrested in April 1690 for attempting to join James II in France
- Eventually case is dismissed
- Anne suffered bouts of depression during their separation
- With the crowning of Queen Anne, the Finches are able to return to court

Anne Finch, Poet

- ❑ *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions, Written by a Lady*, published 1713
- ❑ Only major collection of her poems in her lifetime
- ❑ Admired by Romantic poet William Wordsworth



Her Poems

- Deal with a variety of issues, both political & aesthetic
- Writes about depression, being a woman writer, female friendship, nature, reflection
- Most admired for her more melancholic poems & Pindaric odes
- Also wrote satirical fables modeled on French writer Jean La Fontaine

The Miscellany

- Back in London after 1702, Finch became friends with writers Jonathan Swift & Alexander Pope
- Began publishing poems under her own name, as opposed to Anonymously



End of Life & Her Memory

- Husband inherited title & she became a countess in 1712
- Became seriously ill in 1715
- Contributed poems to Pope's collection *Works*, 1717 & *Poems on Several Occasions*
- Many poems were left unpublished at her death in 1720
- Several poems found their way into *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, 1755
- Reputation faded until resurrected by Wordsworth & much later, Virginia Woolf