

# THE WHITTIER NEWSLETTER

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WHITTIER BIRTHPLACE - FALL 2001

*Tom Vartabedian Photo*

## WHITTIER BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 2000

During the past few years a number of articles dealing with topics like sentimentality, fugitive slaves and captivity narratives have included references to and sometimes significant comments on Whittier's poetry and his life. Some of these are now surveyed. The first of these essays, "Mythic Struggles Between East and West: Mark Twain's Speech at Whittier's 70th Birthday Celebration and W. D. Howells's *A Chance Acquaintance*" by Harold K. Bush, appeared in *American Literary Realism* (Vol. 27, 1995, 53-73). It analyzes Mark Twain's speech at the Whittier celebration, which was intended to be a humorous tribute to the then revered New England poets. In an absurd burlesque he portrayed Emerson, Longfellow and Holmes as seedy western miners who drank too much and cheated at cards. He quotes with pretended shock their slurred recitations of their most famous poems, only to finally discover that these scoundrels were just imposters. Coming late in the evening and after hours of sincere tributes, Twain's speech evoked mainly silence and bored incomprehension. Still Twain felt that he had disgraced himself by the speech and wrote letters of apology to Emerson, Holmes and Longfellow. He even wanted to send one to Whittier since the speech could be perceived as an insult to Whittier who occupied such a "sacred place" in the American people's estimation. Bush concludes that the speech illustrates a basic conflict between the realistic, vernacular, democratic writing associated with the west and the idealistic, literary, elite approach

found in the New England or eastern writers. As such then the speech heralds the dramatic shift that was then taking place in American literature as it moved away from its older, established patterns.

Wendy Johnson's "Male Sentimentalists Through the 'I-s' of Julia Ward Howe's Poetry," South Atlantic Review (Vol. 64, 1999, 16-35), mainly examines the complex voices and varied approaches to life that Howe brought to her writing of poetry. In her involved and often hard-to-read analyses Johnson employs two nineteenth century poets, Whittier and Longfellow, to illustrate her thesis that male writers also embodied the traits of sentimentalism, moral persuasion and emotionalism usually associated with female writers. Johnson analyzes Whittier's abolitionist poem, "On a Prayer-Book," a fervid outcry against a prayer book censored for southern consumption, to show how closely linked the more popular male writers of the time were with their woman counterparts. She notes that poems like these alienated many of Whittier's New England readers who had economic interests in prolonging slavery. A larger portion of this essay, though, deals with Longfellow's poem "Nature" and its relationship to Howe's sexual and erotic metaphors in her 1854 book, Passion Flowers.

A much more readable and enjoyable article is Mary Edwards's "The Slack End of A Lyin' Tale: John Greenleaf Whittier and William G. Simms Retell The Wreck of the Princess Augusta," Log of the Mystic Seaport (Vol. 51, 1999, 38-43). Using primary documents, Edwards argues persuasively, that William Simms's version of the wreck published in 1843 is more factually correct than the poem Whittier published in 1867 as "The Palatine," but that neither poem presents the true story. She opens her article with a marvelous literary reference to Whittier which deserves to be better known: "In Kipling's novel Captains Courageous a young boy is called upon to entertain the fishermen aboard a Gloucester boat. When he begins to recite "Skipper Ireson's Ride," the Captain interrupts with: 'All dead wrong from the start to finish an' Whittier he's to blame... Whittier he come along an' picked up 'the slack end of a lyin' tale.' Twas the only time Whittier ever slipped up, an' tweren't fair.' As Edwards then points out "this was hardly the only time Whittier ever slipped up." She then remarks that almost everything Whittier includes in the poem is wrong—from the name of the ship, to the idea of false lights, to the portrayal of the islands as cruel and greedy, to the death of all passengers, and the role of captain and crew. Edwards also notes that in his introduction to the poem Whittier questions the authenticity of the tale, only to reassert its truth at the end. Finally Edwards quotes Whittier's 1876 letter in which he states that he did not intend to misrepresent the facts in the poem, but was only following the account given him by a "gentleman of character and veracity."

Another informative and well-researched article is Beverly Peterson's "Stowe and Whittier Respond to the Fugitive Slave Law," Resources for American Literary Study (Vol. 26, 2000, 184-199). Peterson fully demonstrates that Stowe's 1853 poem "Caste and Christ" and Whittier's 1850 "Sabbath Scene" were similar in both content and theme. Her detailed analyses of both poems demonstrate that the authors wrote "accessible, emotionally charged verses to promulgate their shared religious and political convictions. Incorporating Biblical allusions, the poems stir up feelings of religious indignation by inviting readers to identify with the mistreated slaves. The poems urge the readers to trust their feelings—not pronouncements from received authorities such as the church and state—to lead them to correct moral actions." Her discussion of Whittier's poem is thorough and enlightening, especially in her analysis of a stanza that Whittier excised from his later published versions. She places both poems within the context of the liberal, romantic religious thought of the time, one which interpreted moral values based on love and compassion rather than dogma and Biblical law. The latter part of the article examines other Whittier poems which condemn the clergy for their support of slaveholders, and finally Peterson quotes an interesting series of letters that Stowe and Whittier exchanged in their old age.

## HAVERHILL WHITTIER CLUB

On December 2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2000, the club again presented its Snow-Bound Weekend, a dramatic recreation of life on the Whittier farm as depicted in "Snow-Bound." Inside the house and before a blazing hearth, a veteran cast in full period dress enacted scenes from this famous poem. Outside the house, over 350 visitors enjoyed horse-drawn hayrides and a variety of farm animals. Inside the heated shop across from the Birthplace, hot coffee or cider and doughnuts were offered along with violin music and readings of Whittier's poetry.

At the 115<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Meeting on December 17, 2000, the club voted to elect the following slate of officers for the coming year: Mariana Morse will continue as President; Elinor Curtin-Cameron as Vice-President; Alberta Andrewartha as Secretary; and Richard Seaman as Treasurer. The other members of the board are Barbara Bachner, Diane Collins, Dr. Raymond F. Comeau, Shirley Osgood-Bailey, and Augustine Reusch, Jr.

The speaker for this occasion was Mr. Joseph Dionne, Director of the Haverhill Public Library, who spoke on "The John Greenleaf Whittier Collection at the Haverhill Public Library." Mr. Dionne noted the Whittier collection is one of the finest collections of Whittier materials in the entire country, containing all the first editions of Whittier's poetry and prose along with hundreds of articles about Whittier published in books and periodicals. The collection also includes over 2,000 Whittier pictures and photographs, one hundred Whittier letters, and many unique items and rare memorabilia.



**HAVERHILL PUBLIC LIBRARY - 1875**

*... for which Whittier wrote the dedication hymn, "The LiBrary"*

After illustrating the variety and depth of this collection, Director Dionne announced that plans are underway to house and display the entire collection in the large, second-floor boardroom used by the Library Trustees for their meetings. In this room Whittier's books and manuscripts will be displayed in a proper setting, available for study and reading. The President of the Birthplace Trustees, G. Stevens Davis and his uncle King Davis, working under Director Dionne's supervision, have spearheaded a drive to raise \$15,000 to buy the proper shelving to relocate the collection. The shelving has now been ordered and should be in place sometime in 2002 with the collection transferred soon afterwards. Appropriately the room will be named in the honor of Donald C. Freeman, who for over sixty years was a mainstay of both the Library and Whittier Birthplace (see the accompanying article under "Whittier Miscellany").

Whittier himself prized the collections of books found in both the Haverhill and Amesbury libraries. He helped found the Amesbury Public Library, ordered many of its books and remained a Trustee of the library as long as he lived. For the dedication of the Haverhill Public Library on November 11, 1875, Whittier wrote a special poem in which he emphasized the value of having books available for all to read:

*And here today, the dead look down,  
The Kings of mind again we crown:  
We hear the voice lost so long,  
The sage's word, the sibyl's song.*

*Here Greek and Roman find themselves  
Alive along these crowded shelves:  
And Shakespeare treads again his stage,  
And Chaucer paints anew his age.*

*As if some Pantheon's marbles broke  
Their stony silence, and lived and spoke,  
Life thrills along the alcov'd wall,  
The lords of thought await our call.*

The summer meeting was held on June 22, 2001, at the Birthplace with over one hundred people in attendance, crowding throughout every downstairs room and even overflowing into the curators' living room. After a short business meeting, Betty Pike read a Whittier poem; and then two students, Kim Cronin and Nicole Pero, were honored for their award-winning essays on Whittier's poetry. Both these essays were read to the audience.

Next, Professor Ben Pickard, the principal speaker for this occasion, read his paper on Samuel Thomas Pickard—Whittier's biographer and the professor's own grandfather—to an appreciative audience including an additional forty Pickard descendants. He characterized his grandfather as a "down east boy who went on to become a journalist, editor, newspaper owner, Essex County historian, a Whittier in-law, and finally Whittier's biographer." Professor Pickard discussed his grandfather's early life and his editorship of the Portland Transcript from 1855-1896, where he helped to make the paper one of the most influential in New England with over 20,000 subscribers in the 1880s. Still the main focus of the talk was on S. T. Pickard's courtship of Elizabeth Whittier, the poet's niece,

his marriage to her in 1876, and his eventually becoming Whittier's authorized biographer. Whittier dreaded the idea of "literary ghouls" investigating his private life and had hoped to have the famous novelist William Dean Howells do his biography. When this was not possible, he asked a Quaker scholar Thomas Chase to write the book, but Chase himself died soon after Whittier did. So by default the task fell to S. T. Pickard who had been assembling all the materials needed for a biography for over ten years.

S. T. Pickard's decision to write the biography proved fortuitous for he had an intimate knowledge of Whittier's life and works that no other biographer has ever equaled and, as executor of Whittier's estate, had access to the largest collection of letters and Whittier manuscripts ever assembled in one place. Using a standard life and letters approach, Pickard allowed Whittier to tell much of his story and, for the first time, gave a full account of

Whittier's political ambitions, his failed romances, abolitionist work and newspaper editorships. As one reviewer phrased it, the book was a revelation to those who only knew Whittier as the older white-bearded singer of sentimental lyrics like "The Barefoot Boy" and "In School-days."

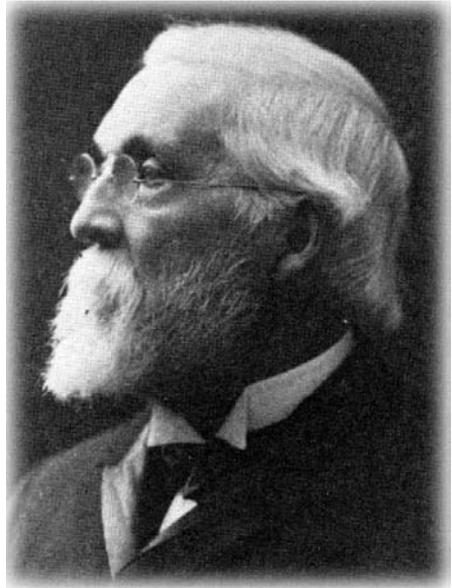
The lecture ended with an account of S. T. Pickard's move into the Amesbury Whittier house, his writing a tour guide to the region and his work in preserving that residence as a Whittier museum. In conclusion, Professor Pickard noted that "S. T. Pickard had a long and productive life and left behind not only an enduring literary memorial to the poet he loved, but a moving record of deep family affection. His life was indeed a tribute to the finest character traits of old New England: those that embraced loyalty, love and learning."

The 116<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Meeting of the Whittier Club was held at the Birthplace on December 16, 2001. The Board of Control recommended and the membership voted that the stipend for life membership be increased from \$100.00 to \$150.00.

A motion was made and accepted to continue in office the same Board of Control members for the year 2002.

President Mariana Morse introduced the guest speaker Ms. Maria Papesch, Park Ranger at Lowell National Historical Park. Ms. Papesch spoke most eloquently on Lucy Larcom, a one-time mill girl, friend and mentee of John Greenleaf Whittier—fellow abolitionist and fellow author.

Dr. Raymond Comeau announced that the final "Snow-Bound Weekend," a presentation by the club, will be the first weekend in December 2002. Volunteers are welcome to participate.



**SAMUEL T. PICKARD**  
(1828-1915)

## THE WHITTIER BIRTHPLACE

Resident curators Betty and Scott Pike report the following activities in and around the Homestead during the past year: So far this year we have had visitors from forty states and seven foreign countries: Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, and Russia. Our first major event in 2001 was to host the twelfth annual, one-day, January pilgrimage of an enthusiastic busload of students and faculty from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to the Birthplace. Unhappily there was no snow for sledding or saucering this year; but there certainly was no lack of spirited and provocative student/faculty participation in the customary Whittier-centered, fireside seminar which highlights the college's yearly (and often snow-bound) visit.

We consider ourselves fortunate in having attended an Elderhostel in historic Yellow Springs in Chester, Pennsylvania, during the fourth week of April. Two quite different, perhaps pyrotechnically-inspired, educational goals attracted us to this particular Elderhostel. First, we wanted to learn about the practical, everyday task of fireplace cooking in seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century American homes. Secondly, and in a more philosophical vein, we hoped to add to what we already knew about the Quaker faith which so firmly inspired and sustained our Friend, Mr. Whittier, throughout a long life, initially as a fiery and effective abolitionist and later as a beloved Fireside Poet. Instructor Susan Plaisted skillfully satisfied our culinary curiosity on the very first afternoon of the conference. Nancy Webster (what a remarkable range of interests and experiences that dear lady has!) expanded our understanding of the basic beliefs and practices of several notable individual Quakers and various Societies of Friends in lectures on Monday and Wednesday. Don't assume that our enthusiasm was limited to these presentations alone. The entire week was fascinating.

A shortage, not of buses, but of bus drivers, made it very difficult this spring for some Haverhill schools to schedule their traditional fifth grade, trustee-sponsored, cost-free tours of the Homestead museum and grounds. As a result we had somewhat fewer than the 500 pupils, teachers, and chaperons we've come to expect between mid-May and the closing of schools. This problem, however, does seem to be diminishing as several city schools are electing to take their tours of the Birthplace in autumn rather than in the spring.



WHITTIER BIRTHPLACE "WELL SWEEP"

*Jeanne Nevard Photo*

An apparently internet-enhanced interest in genealogy is prompting a growing number of people to visit the Birthplace seeking further information about their forebears. In May, two sisters surnamed Singletary, one from Alabama and the other from Texas, came searching for the exact location of their ancestral home, which they believed to have abutted the Whittier farm. We could not locate where that house would have been on the oldest map we had. Then, in August, Neil and Mary Lou Singletary from Ocala, Florida, arrived, not only seeking precisely the same information, but also bearing a copy of an older map which demystified this singular Singletary mystery. On July 17th, the James and Ivy Whittier family of Cambridge, Ontario, Canada, visited us. One week later Gary and Diana (Whittier) Kosar of Paris, Ontario, Canada, came. We informed the latter of the former; and the latter said they'd surely contact the former since they share a lineage and live only thirty-five miles (or is it kilometers) apart.

A group of practicing poets called "Tapestry of Voices" made arrangements to meet on the afternoon of Sunday, October 14th, at the Whittier Birthplace—each poet to read one Whittier selection followed by the reading of several examples from that poet's own work. A chill autumn rain forced what had been planned as an outdoor occasion indoors. Although the old house creaked and groaned a bit, it comfortably accommodated the eight readers and an appreciative audience of about thirty adults and one beautiful (and beautifully behaved) baby. Obviously because of the shocking events which had occurred just over one month before, a relatively unfamiliar but most appropriate Whittier poem, "Chicago," recited superbly from memory by blind poet Joanne Nealon, proved to be the apex of the afternoon. Much of the original poetry shared was also very interesting, and we were pleased that Harris Gardner and Bill Gleed, organizers of the affair, are already planning a return engagement for next fall.

On the morning of Veterans Day, 2001, well before the museum would open, I chanced to glance out to Whittier Road and spotted an elderly gent hustling from his car, up the flagstone walk and toward the back yard, armed with an obviously loaded camera at the ready. I, in turn, hustled out of our kitchen door to intercept the eager stranger and to ask if I could help him. He told me pleasantly that his name was Ted Frost and that he'd stopped to take a picture of the well sweep, which he and his older brother had helped their father repair in 1930, when he himself was only about fifteen. I remarked that he couldn't have come at a more opportune time, because, as he could see, part of the counterbalancing beam of the sweep had broken off less than a week before in a heavy wind-storm. Because there has been a sweep at this well since even before the Birthplace was built in 1688, the whole structure must now be replaced for historical continuity, and Ted very gladly volunteered to come and advise our current "George" of-all-trades and master of each (painting, carpentry, landscaping, you name it), George Conwell, how best to duplicate the durability of the well sweep Ted had helped to restore an amazing seventy-one years before.

One final word, though, adequately descriptive of this fall: Spectacular! The maples, sumacs, poplars, birches, willows, ashes, hickories, and oaks here on the old farm have ranged in color from brilliant reds and oranges, through dazzling golds and yellows, and, at last, to somber browns. But now, on many mornings, to slightly paraphrase a well-known song, "There's a slight silver glaze on our meadows." Winter, after all, is on its way.

## THE HAVERHILL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Greg Laing, Curator of Special Collections at the Haverhill Public Library, reports that a descendant of Joseph Rochemont de Poyen, Mrs. Dorcie Storms, conducted research this summer on her ancestors. Joseph's daughter, Abbie de Poyen, married Matthew Franklin Whittier in August 1836 when she was just seventeen. As Abbie was not a Quaker,



### **BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTESS MARY INGALLS DeVIPART**

*Taken in 1928 - Addition on Right Added*

Franklin was disowned by the Quaker Meeting. After a few years in Amesbury, the couple moved to Portland, Maine, where Abbie had two children die before finally succumbing herself in March 1841. Mrs. Storms has in her possession an amazing genealogical chart of the de Poyen family, measuring some eight feet long with painted illustrations. She will send the library a copy of this document.

Along these same lines Librarian Laing reports the Rocks Village house of Mary Ingalls, the heroine of Whittier's poem, "The Countess," has been offered for sale. This romantic ballad was based on historical fact. Mary Ingalls became an actual countess by marrying Count Francis de Vipart, then in exile from Guadaloupe. De Vipart and his cousin Joseph Rochemont de Poyen had come to New England in the early 1800s to escape a native rebellion there and both had found wives after settling in Rocks Village. De Poyen married Sally Elliot and established his home in Merrimac. The count courted another local girl, the beautiful but consumptive Mary Ingalls, and married her on March 21, 1805. After less than two years of marriage Mary died in 1807 and the Count returned to Guadaloupe where he remarried. Mary was buried in the village cemetery with an attractive headstone, but over the years the stone has been repeatedly vandalized and is now protected in a nearby barn.

Her birthplace, built in the 1750s, is a stately, two-story, four bedroom house in Rocks Village, which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This house was later occupied by Dr. Elias Weld, immortalized as the "wise old doctor" in Snow-Bound. In addition it has one other significant historical association. The house is decorated with a series of Rufus Porter murals in various rooms. Some of these need to be restored, but the house itself has been fully renovated in the past few years with a rebuilt chimney, new roof and finished interiors.

### **THE ELIZABETH H. WHITTIER CLUB**

The officers of the Elizabeth H. Whittier Club for this year are: Marie Marland, President; Cynthia Costello, Vice-President; Gerry Wallace, Recording Secretary;

Elizabeth Dostie, Corresponding Secretary; Donna Simpson, Treasurer; Elma Naumetz, Assistant Treasurer; and Lorraine Reid, Auditor.

The Elizabeth H. Whittier Club holds eight meetings a year on the third Monday of each month from October to May in the Social Hall of St. Joseph's Church. The first meeting of this year, though, was held in the Whittier Home with Frances Dowd speaking on the life of Elizabeth H. Whittier, the poet's sister. In keeping with its aims to encourage women in all areas and benefit the Amesbury community at large, the club's meetings this year will feature talks on the local Sparhawk School by Louise Stilphen; "Staying Safe" by Officer Tom Hanshaw of the Amesbury Police; and "John Greenleaf Whittier" by Professor Ben Pickard.

Each year the club donates toys to poor children for Christmas, gives donations to the Veteran's Hospital and awards a \$1,000 scholarship to an outstanding Amesbury High senior.

## THE AMESBURY WHITTIER HOUSE

The past year proved to be a busy one for the Amesbury Whittier Home. Curator Stephanie McDonough reports, "We have continued our work to restore the framed documents and prints which are such an important part of the Whittier Home Association. Much of the old wood backing, which was acidic and damaged these items, has been replaced with acid-free materials. The lovely portraits of the poet and his mother were cleaned and refinished in York, Maine, with some minor restoration and frame repair. In the coming year the Harriet Livermore portrait will be cleaned and reframed, and the 1837 spread made by Hannah Whittier will be restored."

"Interesting artifacts are still being unearthed in the house: an old walking stick in Elizabeth's bedroom was supposed to belong to Barbara Fritche, the heroine of Whittier's Civil War poem, and given to the poet in 1870; and a bonnet and brown silk apron that presumably belonged to Susanna Martin, who was hanged as a witch and whose daughter was celebrated in Whittier's poem, "Mabel Martin." One visitor this past year, Loraine Gilman, donated four straight razors, which her Whittier grandmother claimed to have belonged to the poet.

"The officers of the Whittier Home Association for 2001-2002 are: Sally Ann Lavery, President; Maureen Leahy, First Vice-President; Alison Kelley, Second Vice-President; Betty Goodwin, Recording Secretary; Nancy Webber, Corresponding Secretary; Terry Bailey, Treasurer; and Harriet Gould, Member-at-Large.

"The October 2000 meeting of the association featured Priscilla Twiggs Weeks and her husband Alan who portrayed John and Abigail Adams. The December meeting had Nancy Perkins demonstrating the making of Christmas wreaths, while an open house was held on December 3 with over one hundred people attending. A collection of Whittier books and souvenirs assembled by Esther Rothier over many decades was also displayed. For the February meeting there was a talk on the town and college of Whittier, California. Finally, the June Garden party meeting featured a vintage wedding gown fashion show presented by past Home President, Jean Davis. During August a new poetry reading group, called the "Tapestry of Voices," held a poetry reading in the gardens. The group read both original verses and selections from Whittier's own poems.

"Finally, it should be noted that the association now puts out an annual Newsletter in the fall of each year with announcement of coming meetings, news about members, activities of the curator in restoring the collections. Two have been issued so far."

## CELEBRATION OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMESBURY FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

The Amesbury Friends Meeting House was built in 1850 under the direction of the poet Whittier, who served as chair of the building committee. It was the third Friends meeting house constructed in the town, the first in 1705 and the second in 1740. For 300 years, except for a brief period in the late 1970s, the Amesbury Meeting has been continuously active. It was the location of the Salem Quarterly meetings for over one hundred years and has also served for the New England Yearly Meeting. By the mid-1990s, though, major repairs were needed and, with the aid of a grant and individual donations, the building was beautifully restored. The structural damage to the front of the building and attic was repaired; the deteriorating windows were reconstructed; the roof was replaced; and finally, the exterior was repainted. The present restored building is considered a rare example of the New England Friends Meeting House built in the Greek Revival Style and has been placed on the National Register of Historic places.

To honor this completed restoration a two-day celebration was held on September 8-9, 2001. On Saturday evening from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. an "Evening of Music with Susan Stark" was presented to over one hundred Friends and other attendees. Amesbury folk singer, Meg Rayne, opened the program by playing nine of her own compositions, one of which was entitled "Still, Small Voice." Susan Stark, a noted folk and Quaker singer, followed Ms. Rayne with some fifteen of her own songs and compositions along with a number of traditional folk songs and hymns. One of her compositions, "Live up to the Light," was adapted from the journal of Caroline Fox, another was entitled "Ballad of Harriet Tubman," one was called "Lucretia Mott Song," and one of her most moving, "This Still Room," utilized words from a Whittier poem. Often the audience sang along with her.

On Sunday morning a Quaker Meeting for worship was held, followed by a potluck picnic brunch on the grounds under a golden fall sky. In the afternoon two historical talks were given. The first, delivered by Professor Ben Pickard, dealt with Whittier as a "Man of His Time and Ours." Pickard examined how Whittier's diverse mix of traits, as a poet, politician, editor, antiquarian, mystic, democrat and small town citizen, combined to make him a unique spokesman for basic American values and religious feelings. The talk focused on the essential paradox that Whittier was both shaped by his times and Quaker background and yet was able to transcend these limitations. No other American writer of stature, save Walt Whitman (another Quaker), made his writings such an intimate part of the American experience. The second talk by Silas Weeks, a Quaker historian who has written a wonderfully illustrated history of Quaker Meeting Houses in New England, dealt with the distinctive architectural features of the traditional Quaker Meeting Houses.

These two talks were followed by a dramatic reading of a one act play called a "Procession of Friends," written by the mother of Barbara Hildt. Twenty Friends and Amesbury residents introduced and performed the roles of fifteen significant American Quaker activists, ranging from Mary Dyer to John Woolman, and including Lucretia Mott, John Greenleaf Whittier, Rufus Jones and Moses Brown. The participants, some in traditional Quaker costumes, read excerpts from journals, diaries and poems delineating the lives of various outstanding Quakers from the past down to those of recent times. Over fifty people attended the Sunday program and all joined in wishing "Godspeed" to the Friends of the Amesbury Meeting House.

## WHITTIER MISCELLANY

On September 20, 2001, more than 200 friends, family, and former pupils gathered for a luncheon celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Donald Freeman, retired educator, civic leader and Whittier scholar. Barney Gallagher, master of ceremonies for the occasion, introduced an impressive number of admirers who shared warm remembrances of Mr. Freeman with a most enthusiastic audience.

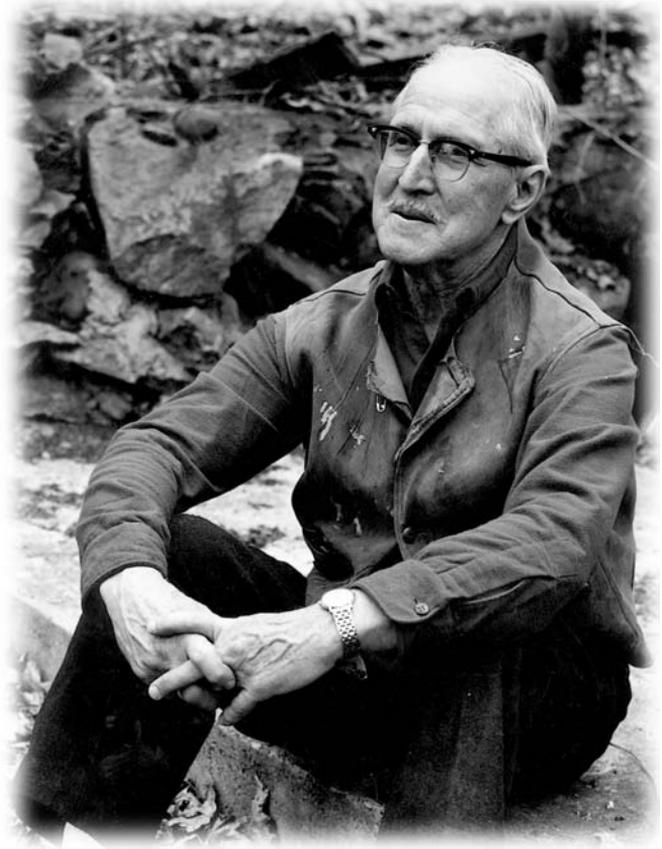
### *~In Memoriam~*

#### **Donald Freeman (1901-2001)**

As this newsletter was being put to press, the editors received word of Donald Freeman's death on Friday, November 30, 2001. At his bedside and holding his hand at that time was his wife of 73 years, Isabelle.

It is hard to sustain the loss of this man who was such an integral part of the life of Haverhill and of all those who loved the poet Whittier. To list his civic, educational and community achievements would be to recite a history of Haverhill for the past 60 years. Every city needs such a leader and Haverhill was blessed to have Donald Freeman in its midst for over 70 years.

For the Whittier world, Donald Freeman was, simply, indispensable. The mere facts of his accomplishments eloquently testify about his passionate devotion to his fellow Quaker and literary hero. He was a Whittier Club member for sixty years, served on its Board of Control for most of that time and as its president for twenty years. Only Roland Woodwell gave more talks to the club than



**DONALD C. FREEMAN - 2001**

*Tom Vartabedian Photo*

Donald did and he wrote the club's history. He served as a Birthplace Trustee for forty-one years, holding the office of president for half that time. During his decades of Whittier work Donald was instrumental in saving and restoring the Haverhill Academy; under his direction the Birthplace itself was preserved and put on a solid financial basis; he established and helped edit the Whittier Newsletter for thirty-five years; he edited and helped publish Whittier and Whittierland; fostered the publication of Mr. Woodwell's definitive biography of Whittier; he encouraged and financially supported the Whittier publications of Donald Wright and Ben Pickard; he secured a "new" barn for the birthplace when the old one burned; and he fought and won a long battle to get Whittier signs erected on Route 495. No one will be able to replace him.

One of our present editors is a former student of his; another has been privileged to have Donald as a mentor and dear friend for over forty years; and all have grown to love and revere Donald for his support and wholehearted backing of all their endeavors. He was a generous, optimistic, outgoing person whose strength was laced with humor and whose capacity for work was girded by understanding and compassion. He unstintingly gave of his time and knowledge to anyone who needed help. He made our lives a better place for his having lived in it. As one of our editors expressed: "I can't imagine the City of Haverhill, the Library, the Birthplace or the Whittier Club without Donald's presence. He was their very soul. We'll not see his like again."