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
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- Many poems were left unpublished at her death in 1720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