

Goose Creek

MEMORIAL for
WILLIAM T. SMITH
1878 - 1956

It was with shock and a deep sense of loss that members of Goose Creek Meeting and the surrounding community learned of the sudden death of William T. Smith on March 16, 1956 in an automobile accident on icy roads.

Born July 6, 1878, the son of Edward J. and Mary Hannah Brown Smith, Will Smith was a birthright member of Goose Creek Meeting. Save for three years at George School where he graduated in 1898 and a few months at Swarthmore College and, later, at the Cornell University Short Course in Agriculture, he was a lifelong resident of the Lincoln neighborhood. To his Meeting and to his community he contributed richly throughout a full and useful life.

The death of his father during his first semester at Swarthmore brought him home to take over the family farm at the age of 21. He continued to farm with outstanding success and leadership until his death. One of the earliest shippers to the Washington milk market, he was Loudoun County's first "Master Farmer". He was especially interested in livestock and built up a fine herd of pure bred Guernsey cows.

On May 30, 1906, Will Smith married Bertha Pancoast, a union to which were born four daughters and a son. Together Will and Bertha Smith built a Christian home and gave much creative thought and energy to the community and its welfare, particularly that of its young people.

For thirty-three years until his resignation in 1952, Will Smith served on the Loudoun County School Board, the last thirty of these as its able and dedicated Chairman. For a number of these early years, and again at the time of his death, he taught the young people's Sunday School classes. He was an exceptional teacher with that interest in and respect for his pupils which encourages them to think for themselves. With his ease in approaching others, he was an excellent money raiser, instrumental in obtaining funds for the original high school building at Lincoln as well as those to rebuild the Meeting House after its severe damage by storm in the winter of 1943.

But it is for what he was, as much as for what he did, that Will Smith is remembered. It was always good to have him around. Somehow he lent a special quality to any group or meeting where he was. Quietly, unhurriedly, considerately and thoughtfully, with neither apology nor insistence and without wasting words, he could be counted on to contribute his own thinking and to listen with interest and respect to others. Such thinking is always subject to and productive of growth. Without overconfidence, he had faith in himself, in his associates, in life, in God - a dynamic faith which always entailed action. When it seemed something needed doing he was ready to take it on. His was not precipitate action

William T. Smith

(2)

but neither did he need to see the whole way clear in order to take the first step. He could start, do his best, and trust the issue.

With the illness and death of Bertha Smith in 1953, there was, for a time, a dimming of the light, but then renewed vigor, the same sensitivity to the problems and the opportunities of the community and the Meeting, the unassuming acceptance of the task needing to be done, not as a burden but with a quiet sense of enjoyment and adventure in the doing. On December 18, 1954, he married Lillian Lawson Figgott who entered fully with him into the tasks, the enjoyment, and the adventure until death intervened.

He is survived by his wife, Lillian Smith; a sister, Bertha J. Brown; four daughters, Mrs. Rebecca Phifer, Mrs. Eleanor Smith, Mrs. Esther Bennett, and Mrs. Ruthanna Bayless, a son, Edward J. Smith and nine grandchildren.

W. Herbert Brown Clerk
Potomac Quarterly Meeting