G. Fred Robinson (1860-1949)

George Frederick Robinson, born in 1860, was the first son of William and Abigail Robinson. "G. Fred", as he was called, would later become involved in Watertown politics. He married Grace Pratt in 1887. As some of you may know, Grace was the daughter of Miles Pratt and Ellen Coolidge. G. Fred and Grace had 6 children. The first son, Winthrop, died at the age of 14. There was also Helen, Ruth, Miles, Mary and the youngest, Frederick. All the children would later become active in town and community interests.

George Frederick Robinson was known and acknowledged as the town historian. He also served as a Town Meeting Member for 65 years. He worked hard for the beautification of the riverbanks along the Charles. He was responsible for raising funds, approximately \$30,000 dollars, to erect the Founders Monument depicting Sir Richard Saltonstall and decorated with the bas-relief of Roger Clap's landing and the anti-tax protest of 1632. The monument and bas-reliefs were sculpted by Henry Hudson Kitson, who also sculpted the Capt. Parker Minuteman Statue on Lexington Green, and the statue of Roger Conant in Salem, MA. Our Founder's Monument is located at the intersections of Riverside St. and Charles River Road.

- G. Fred was the President of the Historical Society of Watertown from 1930 to 1949 nineteen consecutive years! During that time he accomplished much that the historical society is proud of. During his years as President, the essay contest for High School students was started, the bronze tablet listing members of the Council who sat in the Edmund Fowle House during the 2nd and 3rd Provincial Congress was produced and Roger Clap's landing along the Charles River was marked with a granite stone and bronze plaque. Also, a marker was placed in the Arlington Street Burial Grounds for John and Mary Coolidge, a boulder was placed in the Square to commemorate Benjamin Curtis and his home near the bridge and the gravestone of Convers Francis was replaced in the Common Street Cemetery. As some of you know, the Reverend Francis was the last Minister of Watertown.
- G. Fred is noted for writing two books on Watertown history. "Great Little Watertown" was for the town's 300th birthday and was co-authored with his daughter Ruth Robinson Wheeler, a noted historian of both Concord and Watertown. The other book is entitled "Watertown's Military History".
- G. Fred was very active during his years as President of the Historical Society and the town as well as the Society benefited from his leadership.

George Frederick Robinson was also known as a conservationist and worked hard for the beautification of the riverbanks. In May of 1927 the Delta, in Watertown Square, was dedicated with a condition that no other structure would be erected on it other than a flagpole - a condition placed by the MDC, the authority that was transferring the deed to Watertown. During the negotiations, G. Fred asked for assurances that no trees along the north bank would be disturbed and the town contributed \$35,000 to the State's projected construction of Nonantum Road on the south bank of the Charles River on the condition that nothing would be done to alter the river's width. There was a delay because the MDC had plans that required either the filling of a portion of the riverbank or the taking of land. Finally, however, the matter was resolved to the satisfaction of all. The river was narrowed, but not at the expense of G. Fred's trees. Instead the old chimney stacks

of the Gas works were torn down. Traffic lights were installed at Galen & Nonantum intersection, and then the flag was run up the flag pole in the center of the Delta with the appropriate ceremonies.

G. Fred Robinson was a selectman, conservationist, and historian of the town of Watertown. He died in 1949 at the age of 90. He did quite a lot for Watertown and is mostly remembered for remembering those before us.