

Park Rededicated In Bronx to Drake For Poem to Flag

In the little Bronx park named for Joseph Rodman Drake, that poet's tribute to the American flag was recited yesterday in a ceremony rededicating the park.

More than 1,000 children from nearby Public School 48, also named for the Bronx poet, attended. One of them, Armando Montano, 13 years old, recited the poem that begins:

When Freedom from her
mountain height
Unfurled her standard to the
air.

She tore the azure robe of
night,
And set the stars of glory
there.

Behind him were representatives of the Forty-first Police Precinct, the Bronx County Historical Society and other organizations that worked to restore the park after it was vandalized last spring.

Drake, who died in 1820, is one of a score of persons buried on a knoll in the park at Oak Point and Hunts Point Avenues. Broken tombstones have been mended and hedges replanted. Drake's grave is enclosed by a high iron fence.

Looking over the now orderly square, John Mazzarella, Bronx director for the Department of Parks, promised: "What happened is now forgotten and past, and vandalism won't happen again."

The children planted a pin oak tree, aided by their principal, Joseph Levine. A gray granite block was unveiled to mark the rededication, dated April 12. It was postponed then because of the teachers' strike, and again on Friday because of the storm.