

Air Of Mystery Surrounds Statue

Sherlock Holmes might have enjoyed tracking down the case of the "Moving Woodward Monument." This is especially true considering that such things as hidden treasures and graves shroud these unusual movements.

It all began as early as 1858 when plans for erecting a monument to William Woodward were begun at a meeting of the Old Woodward Club. Although permission for the project was granted, the members never followed through with their original plans.

Yet, for 14 years the plans lay at rest. Then several unusual events occurred to stimulate new interest in the project. The first was the forming of a Woodward Alumna Association by the more recent graduates of the school. Second, the tragedy of the Civil War, still fresh in memories of Cincinnatians combined to form the theme of a play entitled "The Great Rebellion." This play, written by a member of the new organization and enacted by high school students, proved to be a financial success, and, over a period of several years, the sum of \$3,000 was set aside from the revenues of this play for the building of the monument.

The dream of 1855, kept alive through these years, came close to realization in 1877, when the newly-formed Alumna Association combined resources with those of the Old Club to work on this project.

J. A. Bailey, sculptured the nine-foot bronze statue, which was erected on a granite pedestal eleven feet high.

On September 24, 1878, the cornerstone of the fountain was laid over the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Woodward. A metal box placed in the cornerstone contained many historical documents and records. Among them was a manuscript copy of an announcement of the unveiling of the monument, which took place on the forty-seventh anniversary of the school.

A little more than a quarter of a century later, a new school was built on Sycamore Street. The entire monument was moved and the statue again placed over the bodies of William and Abigail Woodward. It was the great-grandnephew of William Woodward who officiated at the ceremony which took place on October 24, 1910.

The monument had not yet reached its final resting place, however, for a New Woodward High School was built in 1953. The ceremonies highlighted by the unveiling of the monument were held on the present campus, again on the twenty-fourth of October.

And thus the case rests, for the moment anyway. Regardless of where it has stood in the past and where it may stand in the future, the statue will always serve as visible evidence of the gratitude and love of countless thousands, the recipients of William Woodward's generosity and foresight.