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## UA1B3/5 The Story of the Statue

J. R. Whitmer

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*The* Story of the Statue  
J. R. Whitmer

*Wright*

Dr. Grise will introduce Mr. Whitmer at the close of the program which will be held in the auditorium November 16, 1937 at 1:30 P. M.

"Mr. Whitmer,"

I have enjoyed having a small part in the erection of the bronze memorial which is soon to be unveiled.

At this time, we shall proceed to the statue where the program will be continued.

(On the steps of the Henry Hardin Cherry Hall)

In 1928 a group of President Cherry's friends conceived the idea of having a bronze statue carved of him while he was living and at the proper time having it erected on the campus to honor him and his many years of unselfish service to Kentucky childhood and education. This statue would then be a means for the future generations to see the image of the founder of this institution and a blazer of many educational trails in Kentucky.

This group of friends worked for three years without Dr. Cherry's knowledge. During that time advice was obtained from the late Lorado Taft, internationally known sculptor, and the late Henry Wright of New York City, landscape architect of Western campus for more than a quarter of a century. Mr. Taft was interested in the project from the first, as he could carve the statue with a living subject as a model, which he said was superior to working from pictures and descriptions.

One morning in the fall of 1931 when Mr. Wright was present, the group thought it would be a good time to ask President Cherry to give his consent to this undertaking. After the proposition

had been presented, President Cherry who was never known to retreat, stepped back into the corner of his office and sat down. The group waited in silence for his final answer. He replied "I am in the hands of my friends."

At this time no organization had been perfected and the group was without means. These men could not ask an internationally known artist to work on a \$20,000 piece of sculpture without some financial encouragement. Eight faculty members contributed \$12.50 each and a check for \$100.00 was sent to Mr. Taft in advance of President Cherry's arrival at Chicago. President Cherry spent several days, at different times in the studio of Lorado Taft. Mr. Taft's first major interest was manifested when he reduced the price of the original cost of this statue from \$20,000 to \$10,000. This amount was for the statue itself. This does not show all of Mr. Taft's interest and contributions. After he had worked for some time on an eight foot statue, he tore this one down and began another ten feet in height at an additional cost to himself of \$1,000. The statue was finished in clay in 1934. It was the last major piece of sculpture produced by this great sculptor.

Mr. Wright's first location of the statue was down on the west side of the hill looking toward the Kentucky Building and Dr. Cherry's old home. After this building, which bears the name of Henry Hardin Cherry was assured Mr. Wright changed the location to where the statue now stands. He did this on his last visit to the Hill.

This trio of great men passed off the stage of action within a short time of each other. Henry Wright, the sandscape architect of College Heights, who reduced President Cherry's dreams to blue

prints, died July 16, 1936. Mr. Taft, who had more pieces of sculpture in the United States at the time of his death than any other living artist, died October 30, 1936, and President Cherry left us August 1, 1937.

The Faculty contributed approximately \$4,000, the alumni, students and friends \$5,000, and the citizens of Bowling Green \$3,000. The names of the donors with other records were buried in a copper box beneath the pedestal of the statue, November----- 1937. If this statue is ever taken down, and some generation in the far distant future digs into that strong box they will be able to know something of the spirit of Western as we know it today.

The citizens of this, his native community and state, will not remember very much that is said here today but they cannot forget what he did down in the valley and on this acropolis during his forty-six years of faithful service. Some one has said President Cherry's monument is the nineteen beautiful buildings which crown this Hill, but this statue is an exact reproduction in bronze carved from life of the man who saw the vision, and in whose mind these buildings were created. The words of Horace when he spoke of the endurance of his poems would be as descriptive of the work of him whom we honor today. "I have reared a monument more enduring than bronze, and loftier than the royal pyramids, one that no wasting rain, no unavailing north wind can destroy, no, not even the unending years nor the flight of time itself. I shall not wholly die."

Those of us who are numbered among his 32,000 students and have seen and loved him did not want to be selfish; we wanted future generations to see him in bronze as we saw him in the

flesh. He was spoken of most often as a human dynamo--the spirit of the Hill. That dynamo who electrified every human individual with whom he came in contact to do his best in life, has been stilled, but the spirit of Western lives on.

The unveiling of this statue today will commemorate the closing of an epoch in the history of this college whose destinies were so long directed by this great educator, inspirer of youth, and philosopher. Then while not forgetting the past we shall turn our eyes toward the future, but a future in which his influence will continue to live in the lives of men and women long after this bronze monument, erected to his memory, has crumbled into dust. President Cherry is not with us today encouraging, cheering, inspiring every one near and forgetting himself, but his words carved on the granite pedestal upon which his image stands will echo down through the ages: "He who turns his back upon the school turns his back upon the flag."

It is a real joy to have the privilege at this time of introducing to this great host of friends of the late President, his two daughters Josephine and Elizabeth, who will now have the privilege and honor of unveiling this memorial bronze statue of their father, Henry Hardin Cherry. His son, Hardin Junior, will accompany them to the statue.

J. R. Whitmer