

WITHROW TOWER

When Charles Midlam, secretary of the Bricklayer and Hod Carriers Union was approached by the Board of Education , seeking help in locating a master craftsman to build a tall tower at the entrance of Withrow High School, his immediate choice is Charles Shear, Sr. Mr. Shear had built a number of the bigger homes on Madison Road, Victoria, Observatory and Erie Avenues. He was recognized for his workmanship and his flair for the dramatic in design.

His goal was to build a tower that would attract all over the Hyde Park area. Withrow High was to become the focal point of the community. It required a stone and cement foundation (12) twelve feet deep, and minimum of twelve feet square. The tower was to be approximately thirty-feet high. Mr. Shear, was not one to cut corners in his work. He had his brick layers carefully lay each brick in his place and meticulously tool each joint. The school, originally named East High, was renamed Withrow High School for former principal John Withrow.

Built in the early 1920's, the tower has not required any serious "rehabbing" other than normal cleaning and tuck pointing of the bricks. It remains a tower of attraction in the Hyde park community, so much that a third generation of Shears, Thomas Shear, grandson of the builder, was permitted to climb to the top when he was elected Top Tiger of Withrow in 1966. Tom's two brothers Patrick and Douglas who is now the Career Education Coordinator for Cincinnati Public Schools and his Uncle Henry, are also Withrow graduates.

The boys mother, Betty Jean Shafer Shear, a daughter and Robert Shafer former business manager of the Board, rounds out a long and devoted family in the Withrow tradition.

Information submitted by Doug Shear

The great, great grandson of Charles Shear Sr.