

Nineteen hundred and forty-three marks the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of William Woodward, the founder of Woodward High School.

Early in his life, William Woodward felt the lure of adventure in the West. At the age of twenty-three, he left his native Connecticut. He traveled through forests and over mountains until he reached the shores of the Ohio River. From here he traveled by flatboat downstream until he ended his journey on the northern bank of the Ohio, opposite the Licking River, near what is now the foot of Broadway.

Not long after he settled here, Mr. Woodward conceived the idea of a free school for the young people of his community. Out of his own private means he secured land for such a project. The building that was opened on the twenty-fourth day of October in the year 1831, with three teachers and forty-two pupils in attendance, was a modestly simple two floor structure, surmounted by a quaint belfry, in which hung the old bell, now one of our priceless treasures. In the summer of 1841, a third floor was added to the school building. For the first time in its history, girls were admitted to the school. They occupied a separate room on the east side of the first floor.

For fourteen years this building stood as a symbol of educational pioneering. In 1855, it gave way to a greater structure three stories in height and of noble Gothic architecture. For more than half a century the building of '55 served the students of successive generations.

Then came another Woodward, the building of 1910, much larger and more spacious. This is the Woodward of today. For more than a hundred years, various buildings, each known as Woodward High School, have occupied the same location. The ground has been hallowed by the youth who have passed beneath her portals. May her name ever be cherished in the hearts of her students and may she continue her noble mission of education for Democracy.