

= Burnside Fountain =

The Burnside Fountain is a non @-@ functioning drinking fountain at the southeast corner of Worcester Common in Worcester , Massachusetts . It consists of two parts , a pink granite basin , and a bronze statue of a young boy riding a sea turtle . The basin was designed by architect Henry Bacon , who later designed the Lincoln Memorial in Washington , D.C. , and the figure was created by sculptor Charles Y. Harvey . Harvey committed suicide before finishing the sculpture , and Sherry Fry completed the bronze . The Burnside Fountain was commissioned in 1905 by the city of Worcester after Harriet F. Burnside bequeathed US \$ 5 @,@ 000 to create a fountain to provide fresh water for people , horses and dogs , in the memory of her father , a prominent lawyer . The fountain was installed in 1912 in Central Square , then moved in 1969 to its current location on Worcester Common . In 1970 the statue was stolen , and was re @-@ installed two years later . An attempted theft occurred in 2004 .

The bronze is officially named Boy with a Turtle but is known to locals as Turtle Boy . Turtle Boy has become an unofficial mascot for Worcester , much in the same way the Manneken Pis is for Brussels . The Burnside Fountain 's popularity is derived mostly from viewers ' incorrect interpretation of the statue . Over its 100 @-@ year existence , it has been referenced in stories and songs , as well as having a music contest and a microbrew named after it .

= = Description = =

The Burnside Fountain is 12 feet (3 @.@ 7 m) wide , 5 feet (1 @.@ 5 m) tall , and consists of two parts , the basin and the sculpture . The pink granite basin is rectangular and has four large bowls , two on either end , carved into its top . These bowls were originally designed as water troughs for horses , and a smaller , lower , bowl located on the rear of the fountain was designed for dogs .

The bronze sculpture sits on a circular base in the middle of the basin . The sculpture is officially known as Boy with a Turtle , as its figure is of a young boy , in the nude , riding a sea turtle . In 1986 the Worcester municipal parks and recreation department described the statue with the sentence , " The boy holding the turtle , his hair flying , a sly smile on his face , is charming and disarming . "

= = Background = =

Samuel Burnside was a prominent lawyer in Worcester who studied law at Dartmouth College in the early 1800s . Burnside had three daughters , Sophia , Harriet , and Elizabeth , who went on to be called by Frederick Clifton Pierce " the most notable figures in the life of Worcester . " The notability of the three daughters was due in part to the prestige and wealth Samuel Burnside had accrued as Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas . Both before and after Samuel Burnside 's death on July 25 , 1850 , his three daughters were known for charitable works , having donated public gardens and a library to the city of Worcester . One daughter 's most well @-@ known donation to the city came in the form of a bequest in her will . In 1904 , Harriet Burnside died and left \$ 5 @,@ 000 in her will to the city of Worcester to build a fountain as a memorial to her father .

= = History = =

When Burnside bequeathed the money for the fountain , she asked that it be designed for use as a drinking trough for horses and also for dogs . The commission was originally intended for Daniel Chester French , but , according to a paper by Zelotes W. Coombs , French turned down the commission due to " pressure of other engagements , however ... he did supervise the work . " French assigned the design of the basin to Henry Bacon , who would later work with French on the Lincoln Memorial . The sculpture was assigned to Charles Y. Harvey , a graduate of the American Academy in Rome , who had worked with Augustus Saint @-@ Gaudens on the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial in Boston .

Charles Y. Harvey began work on Boy with Turtle at his studio in New York City , believing that this work was going to be his masterpiece . Almost immediately he began second guessing his design and feeling that it was inadequate . This negativity was a trait that he had shown many times in the past . Roughly a week after beginning the sculpture , Harvey began hearing voices commanding him to kill himself . A paper about restoring the sculpture written at Worcester Polytechnic Institute claims the voices he was hearing were coming from the partially carved sculpture itself . These voices set the date of Saturday January 27 , 1912 for Harvey to kill himself . On that date he laid down his tools , headed to Bronx Park with two razors , and slit his own throat along the west bank of the Bronx River .

After Harvey 's death , Sherry Fry , a fellow American Academy graduate , was invited to finish the work according to the original designs Harvey had laid out . Fry completed the sculpture , and it was delivered along with the basin to Worcester in 1912 . There had been much discussion about where to install the fountain . Central Square , just off the Worcester Common was chosen with only slight opposition from " market gardeners who had been using the east end of the Common for their summer outdoor market . " When it was installed in Central Square , There was no dedication ceremony or unveiling for the fountain . A news article on October 11 , 1912 stated that Worcester Mayor Philip O ? Connell , " believes it will be well to have the fountain placed in use without ceremony . ? This lack of a ceremony is presumably due to Harvey 's suicide and the desire to not celebrate such an act .

By 1912 , the use of horse and buggy had fallen out of fashion , and the Burnside Fountain saw little use in its intended purpose . By 1939 citizens of Worcester were already calling for the fountain to be moved to a more suitable place where it could be of more use . It took until 1969 for the Burnside Fountain to be moved from Central Square . It was relocated to the Worcester Common and turned to face Salem Square . One year later , in May 1970 , the statue was ripped from its pedestal and stolen . It was returned later that same year , but it took until 1972 for the boy and turtle to be placed back on top of the basin . Another apparent theft attempt happened in 2004 when the bronze sculpture was toppled off its pedestal and left dangling off the basin . The city was quick to fix the statue this time , with it being righted and reattached within days .

In 2010 , the Burnside Fountain was named one of WAAF 's " Hill @-@ Man 's 25 Greatest Places in Massachusetts . " That same year , it was also nominated for " Worst Public Art in New England " by a regional Art blog . Around this same time a small group of volunteers began the " Turtle Boy Urban Gardeners , " a group dedicated to keeping the plantings around the Burnside Fountain presentable .

For the last few decades the Burnside Fountain has been in disrepair . A 1986 inventory of public memorials in Worcester , compiled by the municipal parks and recreation department , listed the fountains problems as " chipped stone , water system , bronze surface corrosion , rust staining , litter , " and the Smithsonian Art Inventories Catalog surveyed the fountain in September 1994 and listed its condition as " treatment urgent . " With the one @-@ hundredth anniversary of the Burnside Fountain coming in 2012 , there has been renewed interest in restoring the fountain . Restoration estimates run between USD \$ 40 @,@ 000 to \$ 60 @,@ 000 , which is more than the city is willing to spend . Probably because of this , there are no official plans to restore the fountain , as of June 2012 .

= = " Turtle Boy " = =

The statue that sits atop the Burnside Fountain is now commonly referred to as Turtle Boy . In the tradition of the Manneken Pis in Brussels , Turtle Boy has become an unofficial mascot for Worcester . Much of the local popularity of the statue is due to bawdy insinuations about how the boy and the turtle are portrayed . Anonymous members of the Worcester community sometimes dress the statue in festive clothes for holidays , local bands write crowd @-@ pleasing songs about it , and the statue has even graced postcards of the city .

The popularity of Turtle Boy began around the time it was installed in Central Square . In 1916 the Burnside Fountain 's boy and turtle appeared in The Cloud Bird , a children 's book by Margaret C.

Getchell in which each chapter was about a Worcester landmark . In the eighth chapter , " The Adventurer in Armor , " a small girl finds a young , Peter Pan @-@ like faun who had agreed to hold back the turtle . They later go on an adventure upon the turtle 's back , but return at the end of the day . By the late 2000s " Turtle Boy " was a common term used to align events and objects with Worcester . A local music contest was named the " Turtle Boy Music Awards , " and the Wormtown Brewing Company in Worcester began selling a " Turtle Boy Blueberry Ale . "

Kristina Wilson , associate professor in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Worcester 's Clark University , asked people on campus what they thought of Turtle Boy . One person replied " Oh , that 's Worcester 's monument to bestiality . " Wilson said the sculpture is intended to portray " innocence , joy , and rebirth , " and that historically Charles Y. Harvey came from an artistic tradition in which " the human figure is the apex of beauty , and how well you can capture that is the demonstration of your artistic talents . " Regarding the artistic merit of the work , Wilson said : " It 's unfortunate , because it really does look like something untoward is going on . "

Mostly because of the ambiguity in what the Burnside Fountain is depicting , Turtle Boy pops up occasionally in social media . The sculpture also appeared on comedian Daniel Tosh 's Tosh.0 blog .