

OUR HISTORY AT ST. STEPHEN'S

By Nelvin Yeakel, St. Stephen's Archivist

Laying the Cornerstone

In 1897, Harvey Snyder, a building contractor from Third Avenue in the Borough of West Bethlehem, was hired to construct St. Stephen's Church on a newly-purchased lot on Center Street in the village of Hottlesville. (In 1905, Hottlesville was annexed to the Borough of North Bethlehem.) The cornerstone was laid. The cornerstone included church records, copies of *The Globe Times*, *The South Bethlehem Star* and *The Daily Globe*, a Bible, communion wine and wafers, as well as a few other miscellaneous items.

As I researched St. Stephen's history, I discovered that the original cornerstone was removed and a special service was held on May 7, 1922, to re-lay it. Puzzled why a second laying, I dug deeper and found out it had been removed because of a major building improvement project. In 1913 and 1921, the church basement was expanded to its maximum and current dimensions to accommodate a growing Sunday School. St. Stephen's was so proud of this improvement, that they wanted a new cornerstone laying ceremony. Before laying it in place, a few items from 1921 were added.



The original cornerstone was moved one more time—in 1963 to our new church at our present location of Main and Washington. A second cornerstone was also laid that included a 1962 yearbook, 1963 proof coin set, honor roll of church members who served in World War II, copies of *The Globe Times* and *The Morning Call*, and a few other period items. The cornerstone laying service was held on September 29, 1963.

Will the cornerstones ever be moved again? I can only answer with, "Heaven only knows."