



**CRAFTON  
HERITAGE**

Our families. Our stories. Our home.



# **CORNERSTONES OF CRAFTON**

by **Julie Lewis**

**W**hen you drive through our adorable, 1.1-square mile town, the architecture alone shows its age and tells stories. If you look closer at some of our borough's magnificent structures, you may notice a block with a date or other inscription. These building blocks are known as cornerstones. When the buildings were constructed, the cornerstones were placed and celebrated with a dedication ceremony. While the buildings have a lot to offer in regard to our town's history, what's been placed inside those cornerstones tell even more.

In May of 1873, the Crafton Episcopal Church, now known as the Church of the Nativity, was dedicated with a cornerstone



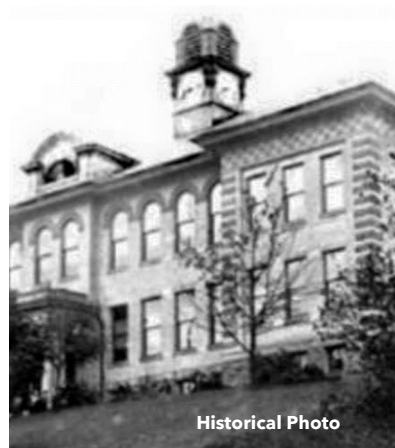
Photo by Crystal Boehm

ceremony. They later added an addition to the church to house the church's offices, pastor's study, classrooms for the church school, a meeting space, and a kitchen. The addition was dedicated in June of 1955. In the corner-

stone, they placed a list of their current members, donors, as well as other church documents.

**“While the buildings have a lot to offer in regard to our town's history, what's been placed inside those cornerstones tells even more.”**

In December of 1901, Crafton was all abuzz over the dedication of the new school,



Historical Photo

built on Coulter Street. (I find it interesting that the newspaper article stated the school was on Coulter, when most residents refer to it as the Parke Street School.) The ceremony began at the old school, with 300 of its students going into their classrooms at 2:00 p.m. The school bell rang at 2:30 p.m. The students marched out of their school, led by the Crafton Brass Band and the Epworth Guards, and made their way to the new school on Coulter for the dedication. In that building's cornerstone was placed a list of the students, teachers, and school directors, a program from the day's events, current coins, information provided by each of the local churches, a list of borough officials, and even the state laws for schools in 1901!

In July of 1903, Saint Philip church built a \$75,000 addition that increased their capacity to 800 parishioners. They, too, had a ceremony, and they included the clergymen's names in the laying of their cornerstone.



Photo by Crystal Boehm

Roughly two years later around the corner and up Steuben Street a bit, Saint Matthew's Church laid their cornerstone. It was the end of September of 1905 and it was said that the weather was perfect, as if it were ordered specifically for the event. As with

other ceremonies, this was also heavily attended. While Rev. Brown, the church pastor, was the master of ceremonies, many other pastors from Crafton and beyond made speeches. The cornerstone itself was filled with the history of the congregation, such as the charter members, members of the church, those baptized in the church, etc. There were church publications and reports included as well.

Less than a year later, in July of 1906, the First Christian Church of Crafton on East



Photo by Crystal Boehm

Crafton Avenue laid their cornerstone. This was yet another large to-do, however the event was postponed at the last minute. Right as the ceremony was to begin, the papers were all sealed inside the stone, they realized that the stone mason carved the inscription on the wrong side of the cornerstone! Those in attendance walked to the Presbyterian church to hear a sermon by their Christian church pastor.

# Cornerstone

[kawr-ner-stohn]

*noun*

1. a stone uniting two masonry walls at an intersection.
2. a stone representing the nominal starting place in the construction of a monumental building, usually carved with the date and laid with appropriate ceremonies.
3. something that is essential, indispensable, or basic:
4. the chief foundation on which something is constructed or developed

Definition cited from Dictionary.com

In September of 1913, Crafton was once again abuzz. Crafton High School, often called The Boulevard School, was having a daylong event celebrating the laying of its cornerstone. There was an all day and night carnival planned at the racetrack grounds on Saturday. At the Friday night ceremony, the



students sang two songs, accompanied by the Oakdale band. Speeches were given by a local pastor, the school board president, the county superintendent, and a few others.

In July of 1927, the Crafton United Presbyterian Church on Bradford held a ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone in their new



auditorium. This event was attended by 750 people! These events were clearly very important to our growing community.

In April of 1938, the cornerstone was laid in the new, \$90,000 Indiana limestone borough building. This was a great event for



the community, being attended by twenty-five groups from the local schools, churches, and civic groups. Mrs. Alice Craft Hardy, a relative of Crafton's namesake attended the ceremonies. The cornerstone was sealed with the borough's first records. The building was completed in September of that year and is still utilized for the same purposes today.

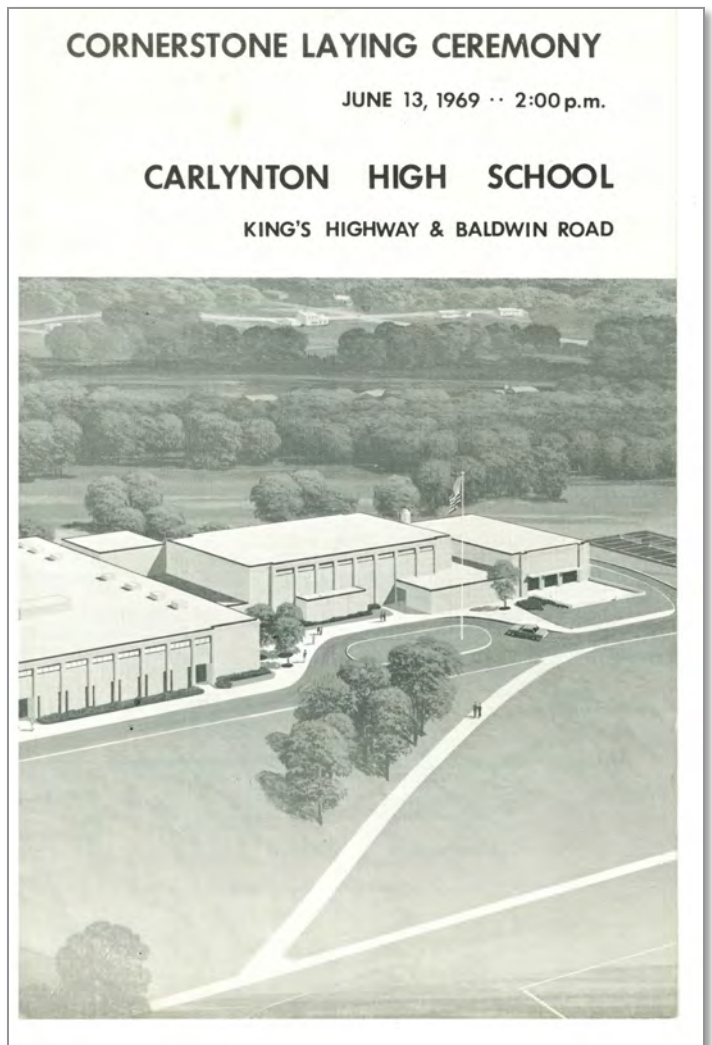
Walking up the driveway of Carlynton Junior-Senior High School felt different on May 14th, 2021. I had done it numerous times as a student and continue to do so now as a teacher in the district. That night, it felt special. It was a gorgeous evening on the hill. There was a large, inflatable arch that welcomed the Carlynton Cougars of the past, present, and



future to celebrate the school's 50th anniversary, and the 50th graduating Class of 2021. The turnout was great, with attendees of varying ages. The senior class worked hard to make the 50th Anniversary a night to remember, and it definitely will be, but possibly not for the best of reasons.



The goal was to open the cornerstone, and reveal the "treasures" placed there over 50 years ago. The district maintenance department ever so carefully removed the bricks surrounding the 1969 cornerstone so it could



be removed along with the time capsule inside. Unfortunately, upon freeing the time capsule, the men could tell that the metal box was filled with water. The memories from fifty years ago were reduced to a pulp from five decades of water damage.

While this could have been a letdown to those in charge of the events, and the two guest speakers from the Class of 1971, they chose to handle the uncontrollable situation

with Cougar pride. Daniel Chamberlin and Phyllis Timbario brought artifacts from their day and age to share – a slide rule, a VHS tape, a corded phone, vinyl records, a 110mm camera to name a few! The senior class officers decided to put in the tools that have been used to get through this pandemic year – such as a Chromebook, a calculator, masks, car keys, business cards and menus from local establishments.



Photo by Crystal Boehm

Though the contents have changed from fifty years ago, one thing has stayed the same – our Green and Gold pride. It was so great to see so many smiling faces at the celebration. We may have passed through the halls of Carlynton High at different times, but we were all there for the same reason – to support the district we love! ○

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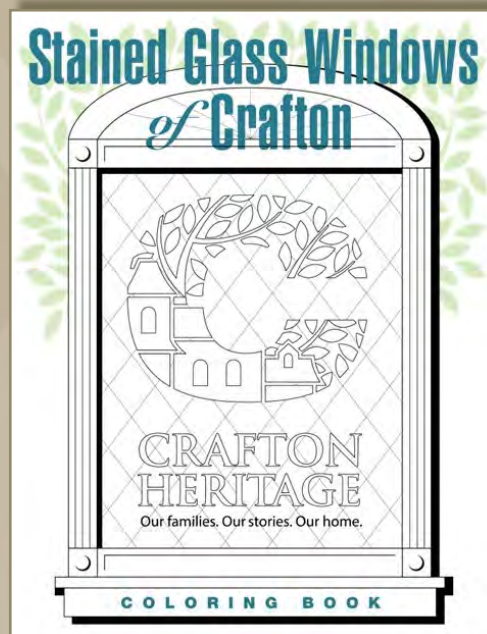
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