

around town

By Carol Kalos, St. Andrews Resident Writer

Historic Franklinville School *on a 1929 Christmas Card*



The museum for the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society holds thousands of objects important to the history of our area. Among them sits a special treasure, the 1929 holiday card, pictured here.

The WVHS is preserving the one-room school on Morris Road (across from BBCC), which appears on the National Register of Historic Places.

Americans began sending Christmas cards in the 1840s, and they were pretty expensive. In the early 1900s, printing and postal delivery improved, and more people sent cards. (Hallmark began in 1915, using the then-new offset printing.)

The Franklinville School card from 1929 was undoubtedly not mass-produced. The five-inch square card, printed on fine ivory-colored paper, shows the school (built in 1858) as it might have looked during a snowy day in the 1850s. The teacher, wearing an ankle-length blue dress, stands primly on the porch, greeting her students. One of

them arrives on his sled, pulled by a red “one-horse open sleigh,” driven by a man wearing a top hat.

The couple who sent this card held nostalgia for our area’s history. The wealthy owners of the magnificent Normandy Farm also appreciated the importance of the Franklinville School. The inside of the card reads, “Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Beaver Strassburger of Normandy Farm [in] Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania, Extend the Season’s Greetings, 1929.”

The February issue of *Blue Bell’s Finest* will explain how the Strassburger’s became so affluent and how they demonstrated their appreciation for local history.

The local historical society and its president, Carol Kalos of Saint Andrews Place, are preserving the historical Franklinville School. See the website for details: WValleyHS.org