

# A Seldom-Seen Historic Site: The Tenant House at Normandy Farm

From outside the walls of Normandy Farm, passersby see the stately white Manor House on the corner, once the Franklinville Inn. But they do not realize a second historic home also sits inside those walls. Built in 1814, it was moved in the 1930s to its present site to save it from demolition!

Called the Tenant House, it is included in the National Register of Historic Places for Normandy Farm. It is described in the registration as a “stone tenant house, [which is] ... vernacular in form and design.” Today, it has been adapted as a florist’s workshop behind the Manor House.

The owners of Normandy Farm from 1913 until 1947, the wealthy Ralph and May Strassburger, were determined to honor local history. May collected antiques while Ralph saved his childhood home, the Tenant House. The couple also maintained the 1858 Franklinville School,

then part of their farm and now preserved by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society.

Today the brown-stone house stands two- and one-half stories tall. There is a charming, recessed front door at the center of its wide front porch. The parlor shows off authentic plaster walls and wood floors, baseboards, and chair rails; the kitchen has a large cooking fireplace, and the second-floor bedrooms contain authentic woodwork.

Although at one time a modest home, it is loved today because it retains its original structure and appearance, and historians appreciate its integrity.

*The author, Carol Kalos, is a Saint Andrews resident and president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. She is still working to preserve the Franklinville School. Learn more at [www.WValleyHS.org](http://www.WValleyHS.org).*

