

around town

By Carol Kalos, St. Andrews Resident Writer and
Wissahickon Valley Historical Society Interim President



Located at 1149 Skippack Pike, across from Cathcart Road, stands a lovely red-brick building, the offices for Robert E. Blue, Consulting Engineers. It is the oldest brick house in Montgomery County!

It was built by Abraham Wentz in 1764 as the Rising Sun Tavern, sometimes referred to as the Wentz Tavern. The adjacent barn was built about 1850.

Colonial taverns were not just bars or wayside inns; they were community centers. In some areas, they were the first public structures to be built (because religious services were held in private homes before a church or meetinghouse could be erected). Taverns became the place to vote, read the news, meet with neighbors, talk politics, transact business, and conduct local government.

The Rising Sun Tavern was known as the “wheat market” because millers and farmers met there to exchange their products, and teamsters made it a center

of activity. The tavern also served as a location for Whitpain Township government.

This tavern has a long history, much of it with the Wentz family. Abraham Wentz came to this area in 1759 when he bought 110 acres of land from Richard Whitpain, who originally purchased the land from William Penn. The property was passed down through the generations and used as a tavern until 1867 when it became a private home. It was sold in 1888 by a Wentz descendent, another Abraham. It has been an office building since 1985.

The historical society holds nine of the property’s original deeds, documents regarding its historical surveys, and analysis of the house’s original paint chips, and more.

The author, Carol Kalos, is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and a resident of Saint Andrews Place. Further information about the WVHS holdings is available at the website: www.WValleyHS.org. The Library and Archives are open to researchers by appointment.

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THE RISING SUN TAVERN:

A 1700s Commercial and Political Center

