

# THE DEPRESSION ERA'S "GINGERBREAD HOUSE"

BY CAROL KALOS, ST. ANDREWS RESIDENT WRITER AND WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESIDENT

The delightful aroma of gingerbread often marks the holiday season. The stately old house pictured here was once called the Gingerbread House.

Built in 1850, this property at 1030 West Skippack Pike was called the Gingerbread House during the Great Depression because its occupants sold homemade baked items in front of the house.

In an article from *Whitpain ... Crossroads in Time* (1977), Dorothy S. Conard writes, "[It] was purchased ... in 1966 from Dr. Edward Ocelus. The first mass of St. Helena's Church was held in the living room when Father Ganley first arrived and before St. Helena's Church was built" (page 238).

The owner, now restoring and renovating the house, believes the property was once a stop on the Underground Railroad. Workers report that they see a deep well in the cellar and found the original hunter-green paint on one of the outside doors.

The front of the house reflects a Federal-style tradition. Its windows, with their original shutters and hardware, show off deep sills. An arched hood with decorative wood brackets protects the off-center front door. Owners previously tore the barn down.

As drivers leave Blue Bell Country Club, they should look for the house on their right after the intersection with Cathcart Road.

Carol Kalos is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and a resident of Saint Andrews Place. The historical society offers monthly speakers, free and open to the public, and the museum is open by appointment. Please visit [www.WVValleyHS.org](http://www.WVValleyHS.org).

