

Rile House - Part 1

CAROL KALOS, SAINT ANDREWS, RESIDENT WRITER AND PRESIDENT OF WVHS



Residents leaving Blue Bell Country Club see 951 Skippack Pike on the left across from Union Meeting Road. It is a large, old home, notable because its front door and transom are often decorated (in a rather outrageous manner) for whatever holiday is imminent. The stucco house, built in 1870, has big windows, two chimneys, and a back addition. An extended garage, once a barn, kennels, and offices, sits behind the house. A photograph taken in 1881 shows the home with window shutters, but today only their scrolled hardware remains.

Four generations of the Rile family lived here, thus earning the name the “Rile House.” “Whitpain...Crossroads in Time” (1977) relates that “this property has been the home of a medical doctor, a pastor, and two veterinarians.” Before the Riles, many families enjoyed this land. The property’s origins go back to 1766, when Jacob Kurr was its first owner. Of note, Abraham Wentz (of the historic Wentz Tavern) bought the house in 1830. Reverence Helffenstein, “one of the most eminent ministers of the Reformed Church in America,” lived here in 1842. It entered the Rile family in 1874, and they retained it for over 100 years (page 251).

Next month, learn how someone begged one of those veterinarians, a horse specialist, to make a house call -- to a human patient.

Carol Kalos, a resident of Saint Andrews, is President of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. Its headquarters and museum are located at the 1895 School at the corner of Skippack Pike and School Road. Monthly speakers are free and open to the public. For information, please go to www.WValleyHS.org.

**WE'RE BRANCHING OUT
ACROSS OUR COMMONWEALTH
TO YOUR HOMETOWN.**

Centric Bank is now First Commonwealth Bank.®

We're excited to be in your hometown with the financial tools you need to manage, save, borrow and protect your personal and business finances with help from the local teams you've come to recognize. We invite you to learn more about us online at fcbanking.com or stop in to one of our branches today to say hello.

FCBANKING.COM/LOCATIONS

