



# St. John Church and Grog Hill

Part III

BY CAROL KALOS, PRESIDENT, WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The last two issues of *Stroll Blue Bell* offered the history of St. John Lutheran Church (located near Blue Bell Country Club on Skippack Pike) and its cemetery's importance as the resting place for veterans, beginning with the American Revolution. The congregation originated in 1769, and it built its first church structure in 1773.

By 1834, the group was ready for a new building, so it hosted an old-fashioned "church-raising," inviting all the men in the congregation and the neighborhood to assist. In return for the men's work, the ladies of the church supplied lunch.

In those days, the Waggon Inn was a tavern, which kept its colonial-era name and spelling. It stood where Reed's Country Store stands today. One day, the workers sent representatives to the Waggon Inn to purchase a keg to wash down their lunch. But evidently, the excited delivery team was careless. As they proceeded up the hill from Centre Square to the church, their wagon's tailgate opened, their vessel fell, and its contents splashed down the hill!

Soon, amused locals began to refer to the area as "Grog Hill." The pastor, embarrassed for his congregation, placed a large sign at the bottom of the hill, stating "Church Hill," a name term that later appeared on township maps. However, for decades, the locals referred to the route up to St. John as "Grog Hill."



*The author, Carol Kalos, is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, which this year is celebrating its 50th year. Its headquarters and museum are located at the 1895 School on Skippack Pike. It also owns the Franklinville School on Morris Road. Both schools appear on the National Register of Historic Places. For a tour or further information, please email [Info@WValleyHS.org](mailto:Info@WValleyHS.org).*

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