The Gingerbread Baby travels by a rooster-drawn sleigh. The rooster in my book is named Roo, and he is modeled after my pet White-Crested Black Polish rooster, Louis. Roosters have been harnessed and trained to pull a light rig in the past, but the puller is usually a large chicken like a Jersey Giant.

The female Polish chicken has a round crest—she is sitting on my hand. She laid the egg needed in the gingerbread recipe in the border of my book and contributed to the gingerbread people I baked and used for models in my book. Her name is Sugar Pie.

I baked gingerbread people for my book and put them in a basket within easy reach of my art table. When the pile of gingerbread got smaller, I investigated. A mouse had made a hole in the basket and eaten the bottom layer!

That's when I knew I should put the mouse in my book, nibbling the gingerbread baby.