

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **DEC 26 1985**

date entered **JAN 23 1986**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Vosseller's/Castner's/Allen's Tavern

and/or common Maples residence

**2. Location**

street & number 664 Foothill Road N/A not for publication

city, town Bridgewater — vicinity of

state New Jersey code 034 county Somerset code 035

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Francis K. and Lois Maples

street & number 664 Foothill Road

city, town Bridgewater — vicinity of Somerville state NJ

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Clerk

street & number Bridge and High Streets

city, town Somerville state NJ

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Somerset County Inventory of  
title Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage

city, town CN 404, Trenton state New Jersey 08625

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

DESCRIPTION

Jacob Vosseller's house, probably built sometime between his marriage in 1753 and 1768, the earliest date in his business daybook, is a two-and-a-half story, three-bay modified rectangle with gable roof and interior gable-end chimneys. A nearly symmetrical facade and center-hall floor plan characterize it as Georgian. The exterior retains original hand-split clapboards. Gable ends are shingled and pedimented.

A severely plain facade is ornamented only by pilasters and a pediment framing the door, and by shutters which are paneled downstairs and louvered upstairs. Two over two window sash and a center gable dormer were 20th century improvements made by the Kopf family (1907-46). Brigham's restoration (1952-60) removed the gable and 19th Century porches, and put on the shutters and a divided Dutch door with handwrought hinges salvaged from another old house.

A one-and-a-half story wing on the south end is also of early date. Front, side, and rear extensions, all 20th century, do not obscure the basic lines.

It is evident that this house has been built in stages, but how many and in what order is conjectural. Exposed beams exhibit a discontinuity of size, finish, and spacing which together with the limited extent of the cellar suggest a one-room house enlarged both horizontally and vertically.

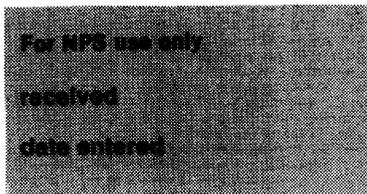
Both the main house and wing are of braced frame construction with brick nogging. Interior partitions are brick. The cellar has rubble stone walls and is under only the wing and living room. Beneath what was the hall, the north end and rear of the house is a crawl space. Footing walls, also of rubble stone, are about 3'6" high.

The front door opens into the living room facing the stairs. Scars on ceiling beams indicate a prior separation which created a six-foot wide center hall in which the door was off-center.

The north end of the house has 7'3" ceilings; beaded beams are 6 3/4 by 6" on 3'7" centers, and beams appear to be continuous from front to back. However, there is no indication that this was ever one large room as were the bedrooms above, where a hinged wooden partition could be swung up to the ceiling to form a large ballroom. Four hooks to hold up the partition still remain in the upstairs ceiling.

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On the south end of the main house the ceiling is higher, 7'6", and rough hewn beams are heavier, 6½" by 7½" on 4'6" centers. These beams were originally sheathed; covering was removed by Brigham.

Roof rafters in the main block are 17 feet long, pegged together at the peak and unsupported.

The south wing, said to have been the barroom of Allen's Inn, has 6'11" ceilings. Rough hewn beams 4½" by 5½" (originally cased) are on 2'5" centers. French doors with sidelights on the south end date from Kopf as does the one-story, hip-roofed extension of this room.

Kopf also added a one-story, shed-roof kitchen wing on the side and rear, removing a corner post in the process. Maples put in a steel beam reinforcement to compensate when reconstructing this wing in 1976. Maples partitioned the dining room to form a den/study.

Appointments throughout the house are original to the premises with the exception of a corner fireplace and hearth in the living room which were taken from another old house. However, in the course of restorations a great deal of relocating has been done. Wide pine floor boards have all been taken up and relaid. The widest board is 18". Doors with handwrought iron strap hinges having characteristic round Dutch nail plates were salvaged from the attic and outbuildings.

There are no extant outbuildings, but several were once on the property including a carriage house, barn, and blacksmith shop. A c. 1900 photo illustrates a frame barn behind (east) the house. It had two levels, with the wagon opening on the gable end facing the ice house. The foundations of the barn and other outbuildings survive.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1753 circa **Builder/Architect** Jacob Vosseller

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Recognized as a landmark on Robert Erskine's 18th century map (98A), this house is one of the best preserved pre-Revolutionary commercial buildings in the Somerville area. In the 18th century, it was a general store and tavern; in the 19th century, a tavern serving stage travellers on the old Pluckemin Road (Peapack Road) until a new road diverted traffic; a farmhouse until World War II; and a residence thereafter.

The earliest record of the property is a mortgage, April 13, 1772, given by Jacob Vosseller of Bridgewater to the Estate of Jacobus VanDerveer of Bedminster (1). Two lots are described, one 50 acres the other five, suggesting improvements on the land subject to tax.

Erskine notes it as Fusler T, presumably T(avern), but there is no record of Vosseller as innkeeper. He was a Palatine German who located in the vicinity of Pluckemin about 1750 and by 1786 was well established as a farmer and merchant with a general dry goods trade (5). Vosseller moved out of state in 1798 and that same year John J. Castner applied for a tavern license on these premises. He notes in applying, "There is at present no tavern on the road from Middlebrook to Pluckemin, a distance of 10 miles." (2)

The initial application was refused, but Castner persisted year after year until finally in 1805 a license was granted. A mortgage he and his wife Catherine gave on the property in 1804 may have helped toward this end, possibly being used to add a wing to the house to better serve tavern trade. (1)

Castner was innkeeper here until 1811 when he took over the tavern at Steel Gap, a few miles away. The new licensee here was John Fisher, previously a tavern keeper in Somerville (2). In 1814 Castner sold the property to John Herder. Herder sold to Daniel and Adriana Groendycke in 1832 and the Groendyckes sold the "Tavern house and premises" to William L. Allen of Bedminster in 1836. (1)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 5 acres

Quadrangle name Bound Brook

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	8	5	3	2	5	0	0	4	4	9	5	0	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Bridgewater Tax Map Block 4603, Lot 1

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

Measured drawing by Marilyn Salvetti, RD 2, Mt. Horab Road, Martinsville, NJ 08836, (201) 469-6948

name/title Jessie Havens

organization

date March, 1985

street & number Ludlow Avenue

telephone (201) 359-2415

city or town Belle Mead,

state NJ, 08502

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Selen E. Deane*

title Asst. Commissioner for Natural Resources

date 11/26/85

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*J. Helene Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 1-23-86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

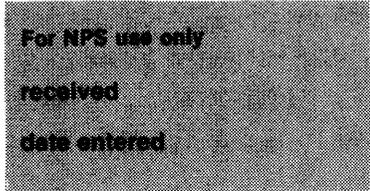
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Vosseller's Tavern, Bridgewater  
Township, Somerset County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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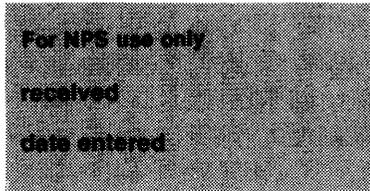
Allen prospered as an innkeeper. When he died in 1863, he possessed a substantial estate, including a carriage house to the north of the main house and a black-smith shop to the south, as well as a big barn to the rear. Foundations of several of these buildings are in evidence on the property. Allen enlarged his landholdings in 1838 by purchase of 10 adjoining acres from John V.P. and Abigail Voorhees and in 1850 by buying 15 acres from Benjamin B. Hagaman. (1) The whole passed to John K. Allen in 1863 but was no longer licensed as a tavern (7).

John Allen farmed here until his death in 1904. The property passed to Phoebe Allen Kopf of Pottersville and remained a dairy farm in Kopf ownership till World War II. Road frontage was parcelled off to several Kopf children for houselots. Finally the house and remaining acres were sold in 1946 to Esther B. Crego, a real estate speculator. She sold the house in 1952 to William B. and Charlotte F. Brigham who initiated restoration work. More restoration work has been done since Francis K. and Lois Maples purchased the house in 1960. The Maples have tried to hold to the original as much as they can.

An archeological potential has been demonstrated. The locations of several documented outbuildings have been identified using photographs, maps, and visual evidence. The surviving building, the outbuilding sites, the potential refuse sites, and other deposits associated with the property's use as a tavern location clearly indicate further research could be undertaken which would add to the understanding of practices of ordinaries in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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Vosseller's Tavern, Bridgewater

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Attachment A

Somerset County Clerk's Office, Deeds and Mortgages -

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1772 Vossler mortgage    | Somerset Co. Mortgage Book A, page 345  |
| 1804 Castner mortgage    | Somerset Co. Mortgage Book F, page 345  |
| 1814 Castner to Herder   | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. H, page 11     |
| 1832 Herder to Groendyck | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. H, page 766    |
| 1836 Groendyck to Allen  | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. T. page 77     |
| 1864 Allen to Allen      | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. O 3, page 152  |
| 1908 Allen to Kopf       | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. R 11, page 280 |
| 1946 Kopf to Crego       | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. 659, page 317  |
| 1952 Crego to Brigham    | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. 778, page 365  |
| 1960 Brigham to Maples   | Somerset Co. Deeds, Vol. 964, page 60   |

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Attachment B

Somerset County Historical Society has long recognized the historicity of this old inn. Some 15 years ago the Society placed a marker in front which reads:

"The Indian Trail Inn was built in 1763 by John Castner. Remodeled in 1793. Later known as the John Allen Inn."

Sources for this data were not recorded.

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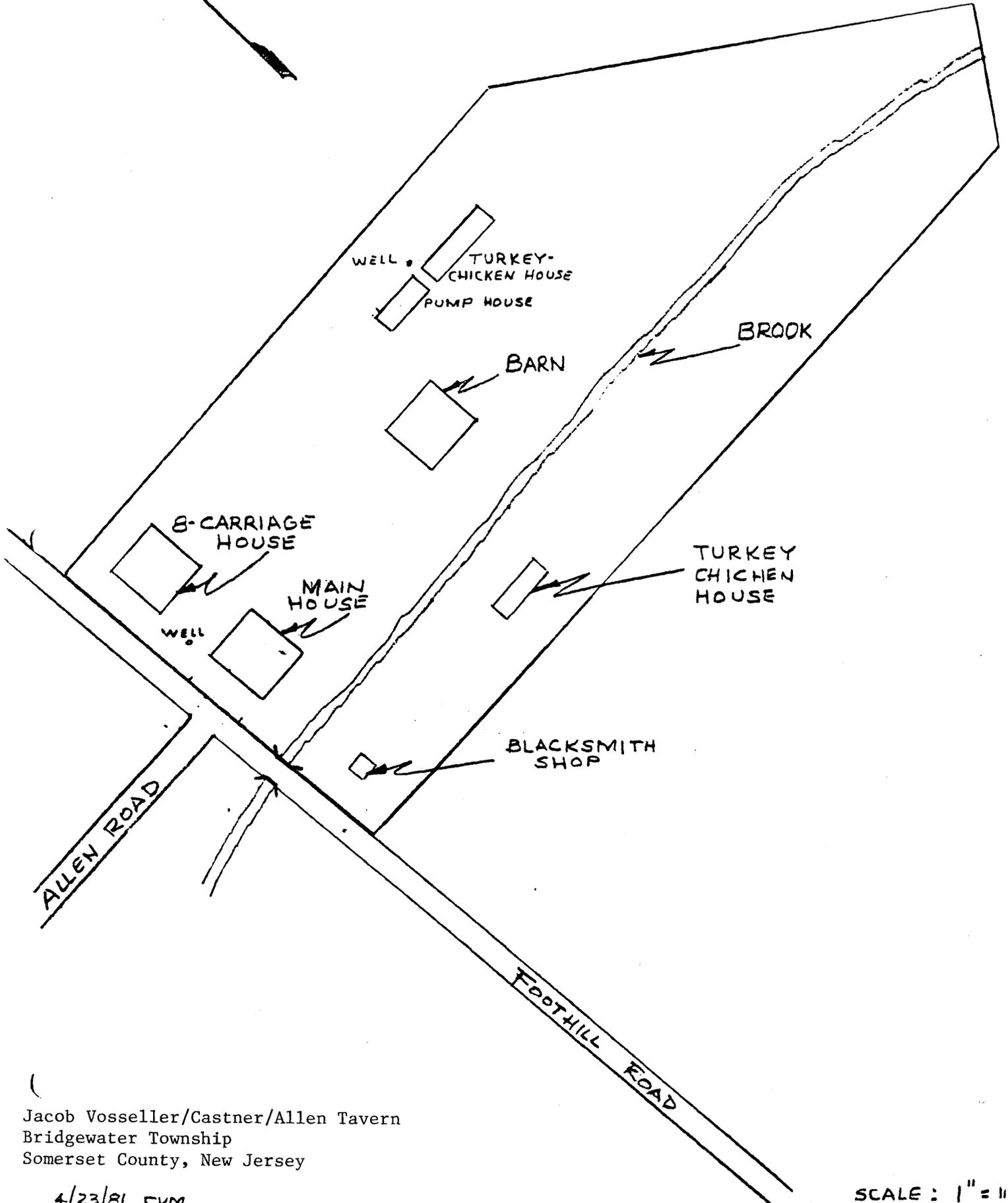
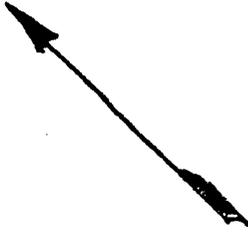
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Somerset County Deeds and Mortgages—County Clerk's office (see attached).
2. Somerset County Tavern Licenses - N.J. Archives.
3. Inventory William L. Allen Estate, November 2, 1863 - Somerset County Surrogate.
4. Somerset County Historical Quarterly, Vol. 2, 1913, pages 265-271.
5. Somerset County Historical Quarterly, Vol. 3, 1914, pages 26-31
6. The Old Farm, Andrew D. Mellick, 1889, page 5

# JACOB VOSELLER HOUSE

SITE PLAN SHOWING APPROX.  
LOCATION OF PRESENT AND  
FORMER OUT BUILDINGS

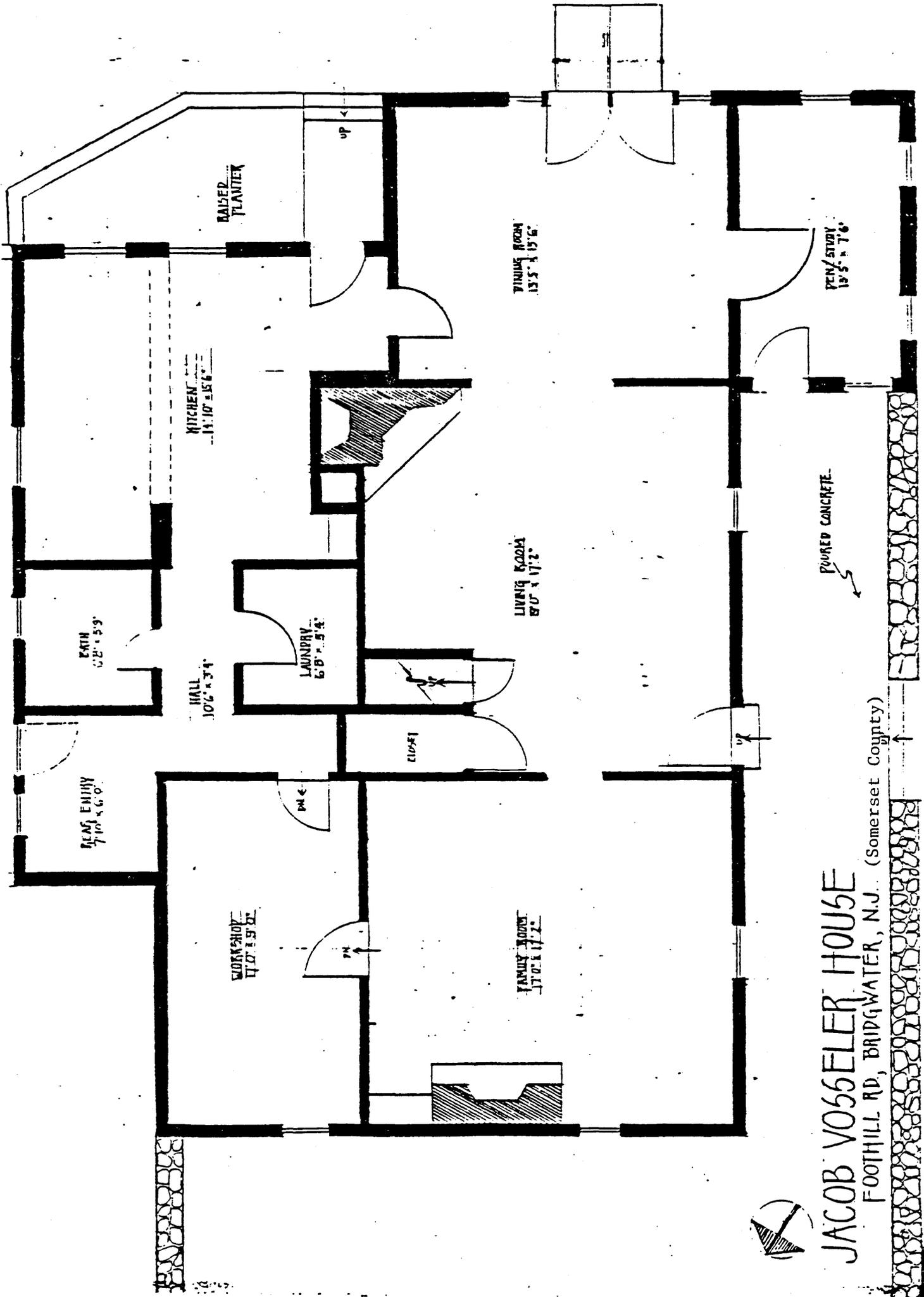
N



Jacob Vosseller/Castner/Allen Tavern  
Bridgewater Township  
Somerset County, New Jersey

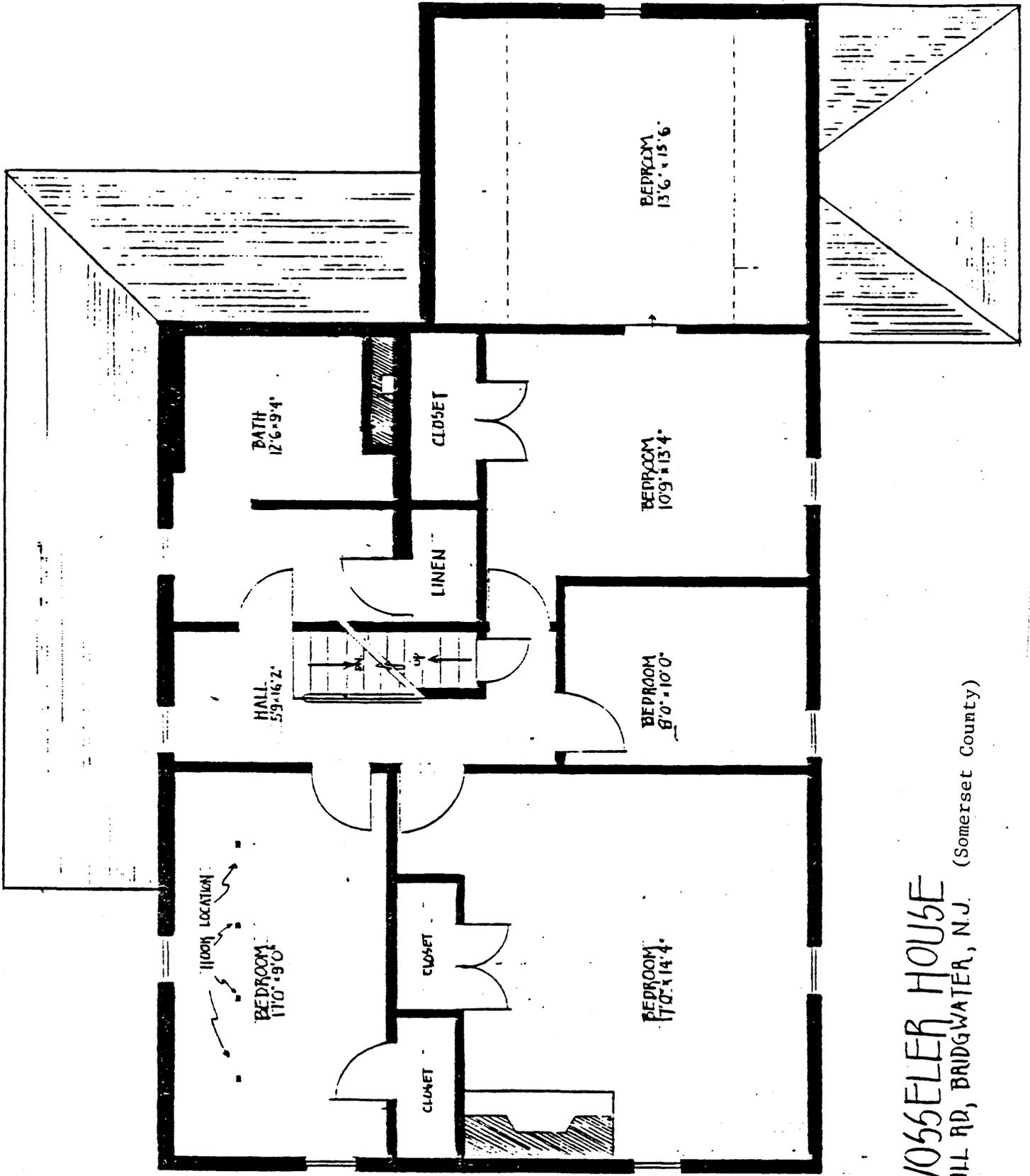
4/23/81 FKM.

SCALE: 1" = 11'



# JACOB VOSELER HOUSE

FOOTHILL RD, BRIDGEWATER, N.J. (Somerset County)



JACOB VOSSALER HOUSE  
 FOOTHILL RD, BRIDGWATER, N.J. (Somerset County)