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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Babcock, Captain Francis, House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 324 South Shore Road N/A  not for publication

city or town Absecon City  vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Atlantic code 001 zip code 08201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Date 5/27/99  
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources /DSHPO  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 7/28/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls wood clapboard

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

see attached continuation sheets

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

**Period of Significance**

1862 - 1885

**Significant Dates**

1885

1862

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Captain Francis Babcock House  
Name of Property

Atlantic County, NJ  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 1.16 acres Pleasantville Quad

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	8	5	4	3	0	2	0	4	3	6	3	2	2	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

3 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

2 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Joan E. Berkey, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 2-11-1999

street & number 1003 Bartlett Avenue telephone 609-927-7950

city or town Linwood state NJ zip code 08221

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Doug and Jane Taylor

street & number 324 South Shore Road telephone 609-641-5391

city or town Absecon state NJ zip code 08201

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, NJ

**Narrative Description**

The Captain Francis Babcock House is a two-story, wood frame residence consisting of three sections: a vernacular Victorian section with Italianate and gothic details built ca. 1862, a Queen Anne style ca. 1885 addition in the middle, and a modern addition in the rear. Set back about 50 feet, the house faces almost west onto Shore Road and is approximately one-quarter mile south of Absecon's central business district along New Jersey Route 30. It is nestled amid an historic neighborhood of mid-19th to early 20th-century houses set on large, treed lots. The Babcock House features original wood clapboards, mostly original windows, an asphalt shingle roof, and original exterior Victorian details. The original ca. 1862 section is rectangular in plan with a center hall; later additions ca. 1885 and 1982 have been added, shotgun style, to the rear creating an inverted "T"-plan. Also on the property is one non-contributing building (a modern gazebo), and two contributing buildings: a ca. 1885 carriage house and a mid- to late 19th-century outhouse. The 1.16-acre lot is landscaped with mature plantings that include red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), silver maples (*Acer saccharinum*), boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens suffruticosa*), and yews (*Taxus baccata*).

the ca. 1862 section: current appearance

This section, the original portion of the house, is three bays wide and two bays deep; its central projecting pavilion, or bay, and front porch were added ca. 1885. There is a molded cornice with returns, 4" corner boards, and a stone foundation topped with brick; all are original. Except where noted, windows are original, double-hung wood sash without counterweights. All windows are flanked by original louvered blinds with original "clamshell" holdbacks. There is a corbelled brick interior wall end chimney to the south. [photo #2]

The west, or main, elevation has a centrally placed doorway consisting of original, Victorian raised panel double wood doors. A fanlight over the doorway features modern stained glass in a floral motif. Tall, floor-to-ceiling windows on either side of the door are original and are 2/4. Second floor windows are 6/6 except for that in the pavilion which is a Palladian variant. The cross gable at the attic level has a mitered-arch Palladian window and an original jigsawn bargeboard. [photo #2]

A bracketed front porch [photo #2] runs the full width of the house and retains all of its original (ca. 1885) details which consist of routed 4" square posts trimmed with moldings, jigsawn brackets and balustrade, and bracketed eaves. The level below the porch floor is infilled with jigsawn ornamentation which is similar, but not identical, to that in the balustrade. The porch ceiling is sheathed with original, wood beaded board paneling (3" wide), painted blue. There are hooks for a hammock at the south end

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, NJ  
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of the porch. From the street, a flagstone walkway with brick steps leads to the wooden front porch steps.

The south elevation consists of two 6/6 windows at the first and second floors, and two 4-light, fixed wooden sash in the gable peak. [photo #3] Covered exterior basement steps are at the foundation level to the east.

The north elevation has two new replacement 8/12 wood double-hung windows on the first floor, original 6/6 windows on the second floor, and two original 4-light, fixed sash wood windows at the attic level. There are also two 3-light fixed sash windows at the basement level. [photo #2]

The east elevation is mostly covered by the middle addition and consists of no windows to the south. [photo #3] To the north there is a large, modern cinderblock chimney. An original 4/4 window, with hinges but no blinds, is tucked between the chimney and the middle addition at the second floor.

The interior of this section, except for the north parlor, consists of original plaster walls, original wood paneled 2/2 doors, original 9" high baseboards capped with ogee moldings, original random width pine floors, and original 5 1/2" wood moldings around windows and door frames.

The south parlor, or living room, has a covered-over fireplace opening and a chimney stack, but no mantel. [photo # 6] Below both windows on the south wall are original wood panels, with applied moldings in the sunk panels. This room also has original cove moldings. The hallway has its original turned newel post and turned balusters on an open string staircase. The current owners added molded panels on the wall, wainscot-style, under the stairs and along the stairwell. The north parlor, or family room, has completely new finishes consisting of crown moldings, door and window trim, pine paneled walls and replicated exposed floor joists in the ceiling. On the east wall is a modern fireplace with a firewood pass-through.

Most of the 5 1/2" wide baseboards, and window and door moldings, are original in the second floor bedrooms and hallway. The north bedroom, or master bedroom, has a wall of built-in closets on the west wall. The south bedroom has the only original mantel extant in the house; it consists of simple, pilasters supporting a plain frieze and a simple, molded cornice. [photo #5]

The attic knee wall is plastered, but the rest of the room is unfinished.

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
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The basement has a modern concrete floor. The north half of the basement is finished with modern materials, while the south half features stone foundation walls and exposed, vertical-sawn floor joists.

the middle (ca. 1885) addition: current appearance

The middle section was added ca. 1885 and, like the ca. 1862 section, is covered with original wood clapboard. [photo #3] On the south elevation there is a 2-story hexagonal bay window with a gabled peak; it is sheathed with wood fishscale shingles and has wood diamond-point shingles in the gable peak. Bay windows on the first floor are original 1/1 double-hung wood sash and have strips of multi-colored glass placed around the perimeter of the upper sash. Bay windows on the second floor are 6/1 double-hung wood sash while the gable end has a mitered-arch window whose lower half is infilled with fixed louvers. All other windows are original 2/2 double-hung wood sash flanked by original blinds identical to those on the main section.

A one-story porch runs along the south side of the middle addition and consists of exposed rafters, a beaded-edge paneled ceiling identical to that on the front porch, turned posts, and new jigsaw brackets and balustrade. The porch ceiling rafter ends are exposed and notched, and serve as eave brackets.

On the first floor, to the east of the bay window, is an original raised panel 2/2 Queen Anne style door with applied moldings. To the east of the door is a small, one-story addition covered with modern vertical plywood siding; there is a 6/6 window on its south wall and a modern 3-light/2 panel wood door on its east wall. It was created by enclosing part of the porch. [photo #3]

The north elevation of the middle addition has modern French doors on the first floor, two original 6/6 wood windows on the second floor and a slender 1/1 wood window in the corner to the west. A modern, one-story screened porch fills the ell between the middle addition and the original section on this elevation. [photo #4]

The interior of this section is comprised of a stairway placed north to south with rooms on both sides at both stories. The dining room, to the west of the stairs on the first floor, has original 9" high baseboard with ogee cap, and original wood moldings around the windows and door frames. [photo #7] Trim around the French doors is modern, as is the cove molding and chair rail. Walls are original plaster and the floor is modern oak.

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, NJ  
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Both upstairs baths have modern fixtures and finishes. The bedroom to the west of the stair has original 2/2 paneled doors, 9" high baseboards, and window and door trim identical to those in the dining room and living room.

The study, to the east of the stair on the second floor, has original wood molding around the west door only. The south and west walls are plaster, while the east, north, and stairwell walls have modern wood sheet paneling. The ceiling has been partially removed to create a loft area over this room. Consequently, the ceiling joists are exposed and show circular saw marks.

the rear (1982) addition: current appearance

This 13' x 16' addition has modern 6/6 metal replacement double-hung sash and new wood clapboards which match those on the rest of the house in thickness and exposure to the weather. None of the windows in this addition have blinds or shutters. [photos #3 and #4]

The east elevation has a double 6/6 window on the second floor and a large projecting 12/12 bay window on the first floor south of an exterior chimney. [photo #4]

The first floor of the south elevation has a modern 15-light door to the west and a double 6/6 window to the east. There is a single 6/6 window on the second floor. [photo #3]

The north wall has a 6/6 window on the second floor and a modern crossbuck Dutch door on the first floor. [photo #4]

The interior of this addition consists of a country-style kitchen on the first floor with 9" wide wood baseboards, oak floors, exposed beams, a planked wood ceiling, cherry cabinets, and a cooking island. A modern brick fireplace is on the east wall at the northeast corner of the room. The pine doors on the cupboard in the southeast corner of the kitchen were taken from a cupboard built into the east wall of the previous kitchen located in the ca. 1885 addition. The laundry room off the kitchen has modern finishes; the well underneath the floor was filled-in before the current owners moved in.

Contributing buildings: current appearance

Built ca. 1885 and square in plan, the 21' x 21' **carriage house** is two stories tall with a cross gable on its west facade. It sits on a foundation of brick piers infilled with rough-cast cinder block. The building

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Atlantic County, NJ  
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has 4" wide cornerboards, wide eaves with molded rakeboards, original wood clapboards (laid 5" to the weather) except where noted, and an asphalt-shingled roof. [photo #8]

The main, or west, facade has a 9' wide, 4-panel wood sliding door (original) to the north. The door has routed frames infilled with 3" wide beaded-edge paneling. The gable peak has an original 4-light single, fixed sash wood window which illuminates the hay loft. [photo #8] The north wall has clapboard in the second story and gable end, and modern plywood on the ground level. A small, hinged hayloft door is centrally located in the gable end. The east wall has modern plywood two-thirds of the way up, and a sliding door to the north consisting of 6-lights over 3 vertical panels. Also along this wall is a one-story shed-roofed car/tractor addition added after 1931. It has plywood walls, a standing seam metal roof, and two single sash wood windows on its east wall. [photo #9] The south wall of the carriage house has a single 6-light wood window to the west on the first floor which has, for its sill, an "undressed" rough-hewn 1/4 log. [partially visible in photo #10] To the north is a modern, one-story tool/barn addition, sheathed with plywood.

The interior of the carriage house is unfinished and has a concrete floor; the backs of the circular-sawn clapboards serve as the interior wall. Floor joists are also circular sawn. The hayloft, accessible only by ladder, is intact and has long strips of bark nailed over the seams in the floorboards presumably to keep the straw/hay dust from falling between the cracks to the area below.

Nearly square in plan, the 5'3" x 5'2" **outhouse** has an asphalt roof laid over original cedar shingles. [photo #10] Original wood clapboards are exposed 7" to the weather and sheath all sides. The main, or west facade, has an original 2/2 paneled wood door with a half-moon cutout; the cutout is reinforced with a metal splint. The door has a brown ceramic doorknob and a cast iron latch. There are no windows. The rear, or east elevation, is missing its lower, hinged door (or flap) at the bottom. The interior has plaster walls, random width pine floors, and wood seats for two adults and one child. The outhouse is fronted by a latticed privacy screen. [photo #8]

the non-contributing building

Directly north of the kitchen is a modern wood gazebo, 10' in diameter, and octagonally shaped.

Original Appearance and Subsequent Alterations

When built ca. 1862, the Babcock House was a simple rural dwelling, rectangular in plan with a gable roof whose ridge ran parallel with the main facade. The Beers 1872 Atlas shows this plan, with no ell,

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, NJ  
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as does the stone foundation under this portion of the house. The original gable roof remains, fairly intact and covered with wood shingles, where it was left undisturbed under the later cross gables. The only mantle remaining from the time of the house's construction (ca. 1862) is that in the south bedroom [photo #5]. There was originally a chimney, with fireplaces on the first and second floors, on the north wall; only ghosts of it remain in these walls and in the floorboards, and it had been removed prior to 1972 when the current owners took possession. The basement of this section was also floored with an earlier concrete that was approximately 3" thick and consisted of the binding elements mixed with the dirt *in situ*.

A ca. 1890 photograph of the house provides a rich documentation of the house's extensive changes under the hand of Captain Babcock. [see attachments] This photograph shows the south and west elevations in great detail, notably the addition of decorative elements and a projecting pavilion to the front of the house, and a substantial Queen Ann style addition to the rear of the house. The front porch may have been added at the same time. Decorative sawn bargeboards in the gable end facing south, and presumably in the gable end facing north, no longer survive *in situ*; however, one remains, in pieces, and is currently stored in the hayloft. Also being stored are the original ca. 1885 pair of screen doors for the front of the house.

Most of the decorative elements added by Babcock remain except for: (1) the glass window in the gable peak of the middle addition's bay window (it is now half glass, half fixed louvers), (2) the turned finials on the gable peaks of the main section and middle addition, and (3) the decorative windows on the second floor of the bay window. Also changed is the side porch along the south wall of the middle addition; the historic photograph shows the porch running the full width of this addition with the easternmost third fronted by lattice. The south parlor originally had a carved, late Victorian black marble mantel and surround, no doubt also added by Captain Babcock. Today only the mantel is extant, but not *in situ*; the surround was in pieces with the current owners moved in.

The 1924 Aero-View of Absecon [see attachments] shows a small rectangular building between the house and the carriage house, while the 1923 and 1931 Sanborn maps show only the house, carriage house, and a chicken coop. Presumably outhouses were not considered to be of enough consequence to merit delineation. Stylistically, the carriage house appears to date from the last quarter of the 19th century, a date substantiated by its circular sawn framing members and by mention in Babcock's 1899 inventory of a "horse, wagons, harness, and farm utensils". Between 1931 and 1972 the one-story shed-roofed carport was added to the carriage house, and part of the side porch was enclosed to form the room now used for laundry.

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, NJ  
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Photographs taken when the present owners bought the house in 1972 reveal the following: (1) windows on the north wall of the north parlor were 2/2 double-hung wood sash; (2) the enclosed part of the side porch was sheathed with narrow, beaded-edge wood paneling laid vertically and it had two windows on the south wall, and a door on the west wall; (3) the upper sash of the second floor bay windows had strips of multi-colored glass around the perimeter like those extant on the first floor; and (4) the north wall of the dining room had two 6/6 wood double-hung sash.

When the present owners extended the existing kitchen 13' to the east, they added a guest room and bath in the second floor of the new addition. They made other changes to the building, as well. The master bath used to open onto the hallway, but it now opens into the master bedroom. The other bath off the hallway used to be a closet, but it was reconfigured and expanded by taking some footage from the south bedroom in the ca. 1862 section. In the family room, the two 2/2 windows on the north wall were removed and replaced with modern 8/12 wood double-hung sash. The current owners re-sided and rebuilt the interior of the laundry room, and added cove moldings, a chair rail, and French doors to the dining room. They also built a screened-in porch off the dining room and added a modern gazebo north of the kitchen. On the carriage house, the current owners replaced the original, but deteriorated wood shingle roof with modern asphalt shingle and added a tool shed to the south wall.

the house's setting in an historic neighborhood

The house is identified as a contributing building within the proposed boundaries of the "South Shore Road Historic District" as delineated by the History Store in 1986. Due to opposition from homeowners, however, the district was never placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey

**Statement of Significance**

The Captain Francis Babcock House, built ca. 1862 then altered and enlarged ca. 1885, is architecturally significant under criterion C as a good surviving example of Victorian era domestic architecture in Atlantic County, New Jersey. With a vernacular mix of gothic, Italianate, and Queen Anne details added to what was originally a simple, rural dwelling, the Babcock House is stylish without being stylistically pure. Well-preserved and maintained, the Babcock House represents a home that was locally fashionable for rural Atlantic county in the 1880's.

**Historical Background and Chronological History of the Property**

In June of 1862, Captain Richard Chamberlain (1837-1908) purchased this one+ acre lot from his father Frederick Chamberlain (1810-1884). [Atlantic County Deed Book E, p. 231] The lot was subdivided from a 66-acre farmstead Frederick Chamberlain had purchased in 1844 and the lot had 165' frontage on Shore Road which was historically the main north/south route from Cape May to New York.

On this lot Chamberlain erected a simple, center hall house, rectangular in plan. Chamberlain did not need larger acreage; he was a ship captain who made a living sailing cargo ships along the east coast. His 1908 obituary cited him as "one of the oldest sea captains in the county" who had "accumulated a fortune as master and owner of sailing vessels" and who was "related to many of the old families in the county". (uncited obituary from Atlantic County Historical Society obituary file) Beyond this obituary, little else is known about Captain Chamberlain except that he was captain of the schooner *William B. Steelman*, a 3-masted, 441-ton schooner built in Absecon in 1875. [Merchant Sailing Vessels of the United States, 1893] It is unclear how long he lived in the house: the 1872 Beers Atlas identifies the house as belonging to him, yet neither he or his wife Rebecca (Steelman) appear in the 1870 census there, or anywhere in the county. In the 1880 census, they are found living with Rebecca's brother and sister in nearby Egg Harbor Township.

At the time of Chamberlain's purchase in 1862, this quarter-mile stretch of Shore Road was just beginning to develop into a low-density residential neighborhood comprised of less than twenty, small, one to ten acre lots. Chamberlain's father had, in fact, contributed to this development by selling off several road front pieces of his farmstead between 1848 and 1864 (Atlantic County deed book/page D/494, H1/96, Y/772, T/867, 30/125). If the footprints of the houses as they appear in the 1872 Beers Atlas are accurate, the majority of the 16 dwellings shown along this section of South Shore Road were rectangular in plan like the Babcock House, with or without an ell to the rear.

In 1885, Chamberlain sold the house to Captain Francis Babcock; one year previously, Chamberlain had purchased a home in nearby Somers Point and lived in that home until his death in 1908.

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### The Captain Francis Babcock House Atlantic County, New Jersey

(criterion C continued)

Babcock undertook the home's ca. 1885 alterations and lived there, with his wife Elizabeth Outten (1852- 1935) and their three children, until his untimely death at the age of 44 when his ship, the *Abel E. Babcock*, sank during a fierce storm in Boston Harbor in 1898.

Captain Francis ("Frank") Babcock was born in 1854 in English Creek, a small town on the northeast side of the Great Egg Harbor River. His family had sent generations of men to the sea from this area of Atlantic County: his grandfather, Joseph (ca. 1795-1850), and his father, Joseph W. Babcock (1826-1919) were also sea captains, as were six of his uncles. Babcock's ties to Absecon began when, in 1856, his widowed grandmother Esther Giberson Babcock married Absolom Cordery who lived at 421 South Shore Road. Several of Esther's twelve children married and settled in Absecon, principally along South Shore Road. So many Babcocks lived there that the cluster of homes in this vicinity was familiarly called "Babcocktown" around the turn of this century. [Ewing and McMullin, Along Absecon Creek, p. 72]

According to one obituary, Babcock had begun captaining at the age of 20; his first commission was onboard the *Lida*, a schooner in which he also owned a 4/32 interest. [Daily Union, Dec. 3, 1898] Babcock began his career on July 2, 1875 when he sailed the *Lida* from Philadelphia to Providence, Rhode Island with 420 tons of coal. From 1877 to 1882 he served as "master and agent" of the *H.W. Anderson*, hauling usually coal, but occasionally ice, petroleum, or phosphate rock from Philadelphia to various ports along the eastern seaboard. His last captaincy, of the schooner *Abel E. Babcock*, began in 1891 with a maiden voyage of coal to Portsmouth from Philadelphia; it was a destination and cargo which would often be repeated until his death just eight short years later. [Atlantic County Historical Society Mss. Books FA-1, FA-3, 74.215]

The *Abel E. Babcock* had been named for Frank Babcock's uncle Abel, who was the boat's principal co-owner with Frank and who lived two houses to the north. The *Abel E. Babcock* had been built in 1891 in Camden, but used Somers Point for its home port. It was a 4-master, 174' long, laden with coal, traveling from Philadelphia to Boston when it sank. All hands on board were lost, but several months later, the *Abel E. Babcock*'s name plate from the ship's bow along with a pillow embroidered by one of Frank Babcock's cousins washed ashore in Rhode Island. As late as 1979, these items were still in the possession of Babcock descendants and the *Abel E. Babcock* log book is found at the Atlantic County Historical Society. [Atlantic County Historical Society Newsletter, Summer 1979, p. 2] At the time of his death, Babcock owned a 1/8 interest in the *Abel E. Babcock* and a 5/64 interest in the schooner *Lizzie Babcock*. [Atlantic County Inventory Book E, p. 18]

Newspaper accounts of the tragedy report that Babcock intended this to be his final voyage. Just before sailing, he'd told his wife that he was "getting tired of the sea" and that he wanted to "look for another

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey

(criterion C continued)

business" [Daily Union of Atlantic City, December 1, 1898, p. 1] Some forty years earlier, his uncle Abel had expressed the same sentiment, but with a different conclusion, in an 1858 letter to one of his brothers: "I had much rather be at home than go to sea but I expect that I shall have to stick to it as there is not anything to do on the land." [Atlantic County Historical Society, Book of Joseph Babcock, FC-7, 764.214M]

The newspaper also reported that Louis Adelung, who had often sailed with Babcock but who had quit to take up farming in Absecon, had pleaded to accompany Babcock on the final trip. Adelung perished as well. These reports describe Babcock's wife waiting for further news of the sinking "in her little cottage in Absecon" and claim that Babcock was "well thought of in the village". [Daily Union, December 3, 1898]

After Babcock's death in 1898, the house was occupied by his widow, Elizabeth, and his two unmarried daughters until Elizabeth's death in 1935. Her obituary noted the following: "With the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Babcock, 83, passes another link with the early history of Absecon, of the days when the sea controlled the fortunes of many families in that district...She was the widow of the late Captain Francis H. Babcock who lost his battle with the sea near Boston, Massachusetts.....both her father and her husband were masters of their own boats and both lost their lives at sea." [Pleasantville Press and Ventnor News, March 6, 1935, p. 4] Babcock's last surviving heir, daughter Annabelle Babcock, lived in the house until 1958 when she sold it to Edward and Gloria Connor. [deed book 1921, page 213] The current owners purchased the home from the Connors in 1972.

**criterion C: architectural significance**

The Captain Francis Babcock House is significant under criterion C as a good surviving example of Victorian era domestic architecture in Atlantic County, New Jersey. As altered ca. 1885, the house contextually reflects the architectural trend toward novelty and picturesque expression which was in direct contrast with the smaller scale and simplicity of pre-Civil War domestic buildings. It also reflects the confusion, and profusion, of architectural styles found in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Like many of the houses erected during the middle of the 19th century in Atlantic County, the Babcock House was originally a center hall, 2-story dwelling, rectangular in plan and three bays wide with two rooms on each floor flanking a staircase. Its tall first-floor windows are the house's singular, modest expression of the Italianate style which, in more urban areas, would have demanded an almost-square plan and a lower-pitched roof with bracketed eaves.

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Section number 8 Page 4

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey

(criterion C continued)

In its original form, the house was a typical variation of the Georgian/Federal house type of which few full-size, 5-bay wide examples were built in Atlantic County, but of which fragments--either the middle three bays or end three bays--abound. The house's wood construction is also typical of Atlantic County where the proximity of large stands of forest created a natural abundance of this building material.

As originally built on its one+ acre lot in what was then Egg Harbor Township, the house was not intended to serve as a farmstead; rather, it was built for someone who earned a living other than from the land. Of the twenty houses shown on the Beers 1872 map in this neighborhood, only eight are identified in the 1870 census as belonging to farmers: the remainder are associated with ship captains, laborers, baymen, a cigar maker, a huckster, and a house carpenter.

This socio-economic diversity accurately reflects the great changes which had occurred in the region during the few years prior to the house's erection ca. 1862. Atlantic City, located just four miles to the southeast, had been created in 1854 largely due to the efforts of Absecon resident Dr. Jonathan Pitney. Similarly, the railroad which brought travelers from Philadelphia to Atlantic City passed directly through Absecon and its station was less than 1/4 mile north of the Babcock House. Ship captains who sailed from Philadelphia, along with others who conducted business there or in Atlantic City, would have found the South Shore Road location an opportune one. In its own way, but on a much smaller scale, this part of Shore Road became a "railroad suburb".

As Pitney extended his development efforts beyond Atlantic City and into his hometown of Absecon, the area soon gained sufficient size to be chartered as a town in 1872.

When Captain Babcock bought the house in 1885, he settled into an area that had been, or still was, home to three of his uncles: Job G., Abel E. and Reuben--all ship captains. Similarly, his immediate neighbor to the north was his aunt Esther and her husband, Captain Baker Doughty.

By this time, Babcock had been captaining a ship for ten years, almost always as part owner of the vessel he commanded. His stylish, yet eclectic alterations and additions to the property reflect not only his status as a prosperous captain, but also the architectural confusion which reigned during the 1870's in New Jersey's urban areas and even longer in such rural areas as Absecon and southern New Jersey. As Guter and Foster state in their well-researched Building by the Book: Pattern Book Architecture in New Jersey, "something new was wanted, but architects and the public alike were uncertain what form it should take". [p. 141]

Better building technologies such as steam-powered machinery and balloon framing, combined with improved travel and a growing population, led to a statewide building boom during this period.

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**Continuation Sheet**  
Section number 8 Page 5

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey

(criterion C continued)

However, the reliable, symmetrical building forms of the first half of the century were slow to disappear and the Babcock House is a good example of the vagaries and varieties of style popular at the time in this part of the state. The house's projecting center bay, added by Babcock ca. 1885, is an element of the Victorian gothic; this style had generally lost favor in New Jersey's urban areas by the mid-1880's, but persisted in the more rural areas of southern New Jersey, albeit in more diluted forms. Where strict adherence to gothic elements would have insisted upon decorative elements with less tracery and more substance, the Babcock House contains lacy scroll work which is the hallmark of the Queen Anne style.

Similarly, the front porch is a confused, but pleasing, blend of Second Empire elements (large brackets at the porch columns with small eave brackets in between, and square posts with applied moldings) embellished with the more exuberant Queen Anne scrollwork. The mitered-arch windows in the house's gable peaks are a feature commonly found in South Jersey but seen with less frequency elsewhere in the state. Mounier, in his Survey of the Cultural Resources of the Historic Era on the Watersheds of the Great Egg Harbor and Tuckahoe Rivers, determined that "the provenance of this window is unknown, but it is probably a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic pointed arch." [p. 50]

In summary, although the Babcock House defies an easy, stylistic label and displays the cultural lag intrinsic to southern New Jersey, it remains a good surviving example of Victorian domestic architecture in Atlantic County. Its vernacular mix of styles, while not stylistically pure, nevertheless create a lively composition which would have been considered locally fashionable at the time.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**  
Section number 9 Page 2

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Atlantic County, New Jersey  
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**Continuation Sheet**  
Section number 9 Page 3

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey  
(bibliography continued)

*Maps*

Aero-View of Absecon, New Jersey. (1924, drawn by Rene Cinquin) [copy at New Jersey State Library; also available online at < <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html>>]

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**National Register of Historic Places**

**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

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**The Captain Francis Babcock House**

Atlantic County, New Jersey

**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Block 223, lot 17 as noted on the tax map of Absecon, Atlantic County, NJ.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated property is the one which has been associated with the property since 1862.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**  
Photographs

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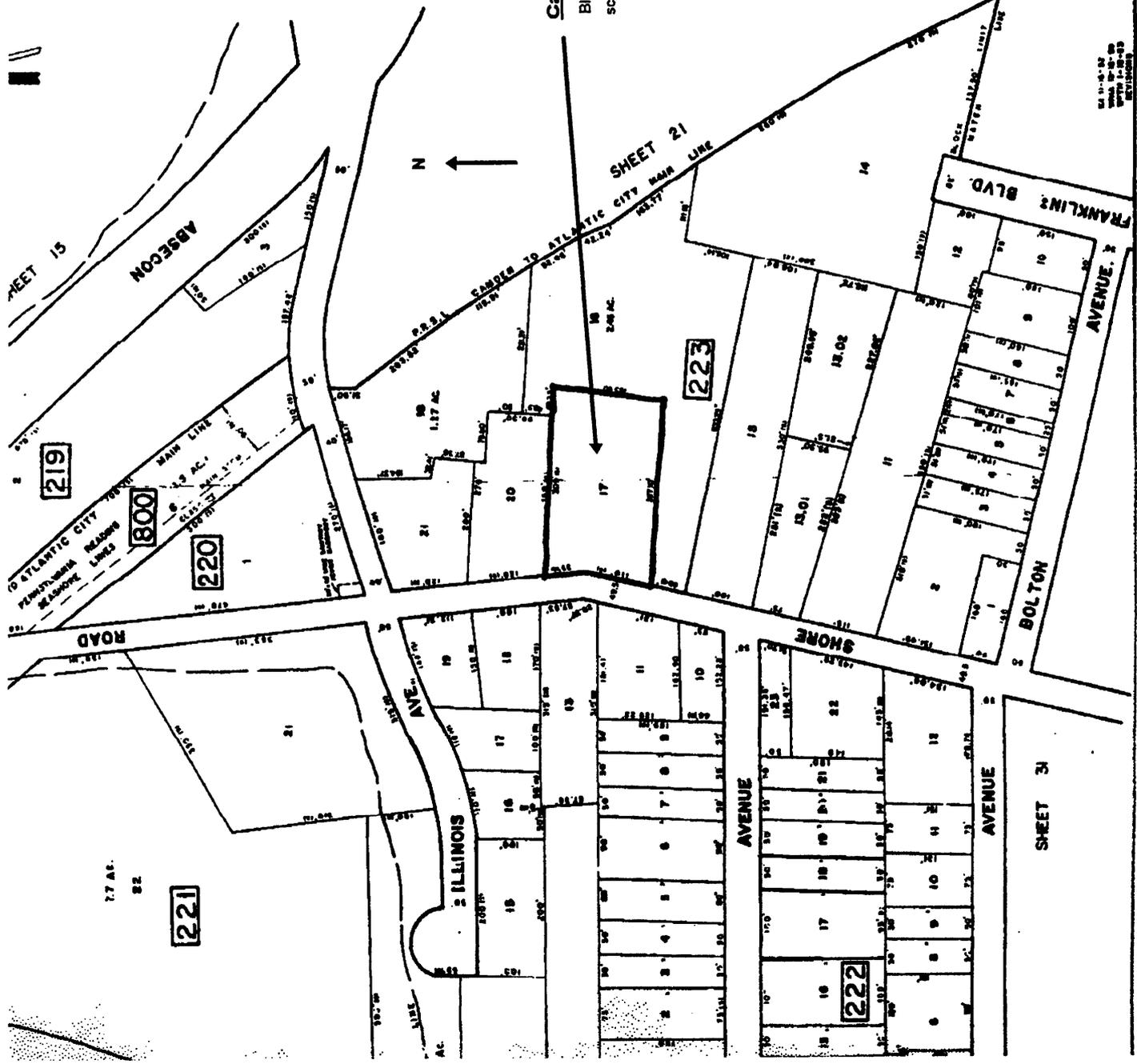
**The Captain Francis Babcock House**  
Atlantic County, New Jersey

**Photographs**

typical information for all photographs

1. Name of Property	Captain Francis Babcock House
2. County and State	Atlantic County, New Jersey
3. Photographer	Joan Berkey
4. Date of Photograph	October 1998
5. Location of Negatives	Joan Berkey 1003 Bartlett Avenue Linwood, NJ 08221

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
1	exterior view showing setting and streetscape, looking southeast
2	exterior: main (west) facade and north elevation, looking southeast
3	exterior: south and east elevations, looking almost north
4	exterior: north and east elevations, and gazebo, looking southwest
5	ca. 1862 section: original mantel in south bedroom, looking south
6	ca. 1862 section: south parlor, looking southeast
7	ca. 1885 section: dining room showing bay window, looking southeast
8	carriage house: west facade, looking east
9	carriage house: north and east elevations, looking southwest
10	outhouse: main (west) facade and south elevation, looking northeast



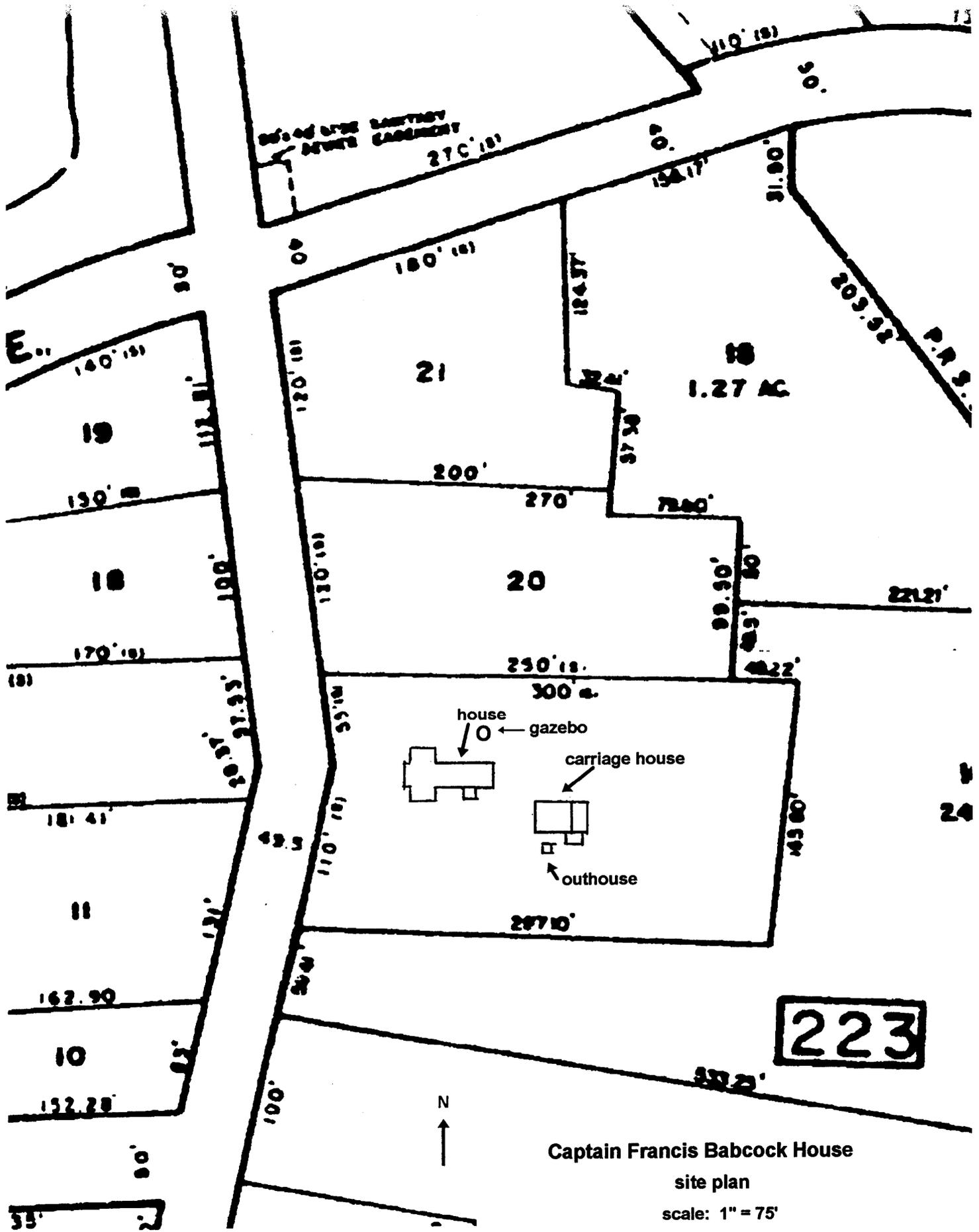
**Captain Francis Babcock House**  
 Block 223, lot 17  
 scale 1" = 200'

THE JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY  
 HAS AUTHORIZED THE CITY OF ABSECON TO  
 PRINT THIS MAP AS A TAX MAP FOR THE CITY OF ABSECON  
 FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE TAX MAP ACT OF 1972  
 AND THE JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY  
 HAS AUTHORIZED THE CITY OF ABSECON TO  
 PRINT THIS MAP AS A TAX MAP FOR THE CITY OF ABSECON  
 FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE TAX MAP ACT OF 1972

**TAX MAP**  
**CITY OF ABSECON**  
 ATLANTIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 JANUARY 1972

RONALD J. PRICE  
 REGISTERED P.L.  
 S. 1.10000000 00 1000

MADE IN U.S.A.  
 PRINTED IN U.S.A.  
 REVISED



Captain Francis Babcock House  
 site plan  
 scale: 1" = 75'

Absecon City  
 Atlantic County, NJ

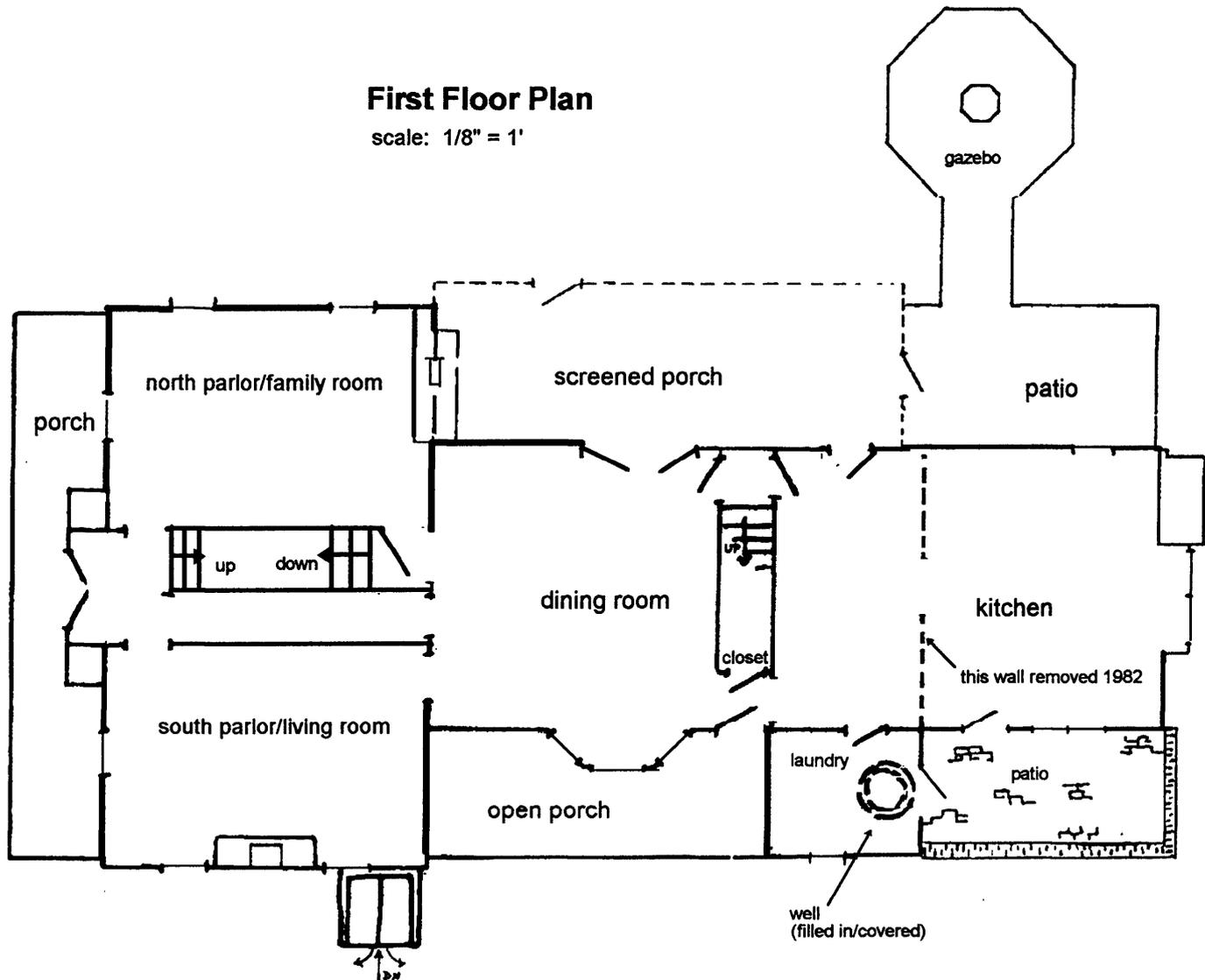
# The Captain Francis Babcock House

South Shore Road, Absecon

Atlantic County, New Jersey

## First Floor Plan

scale: 1/8" = 1'



# The Captain Francis Babcock House

South Shore Road, Absecon

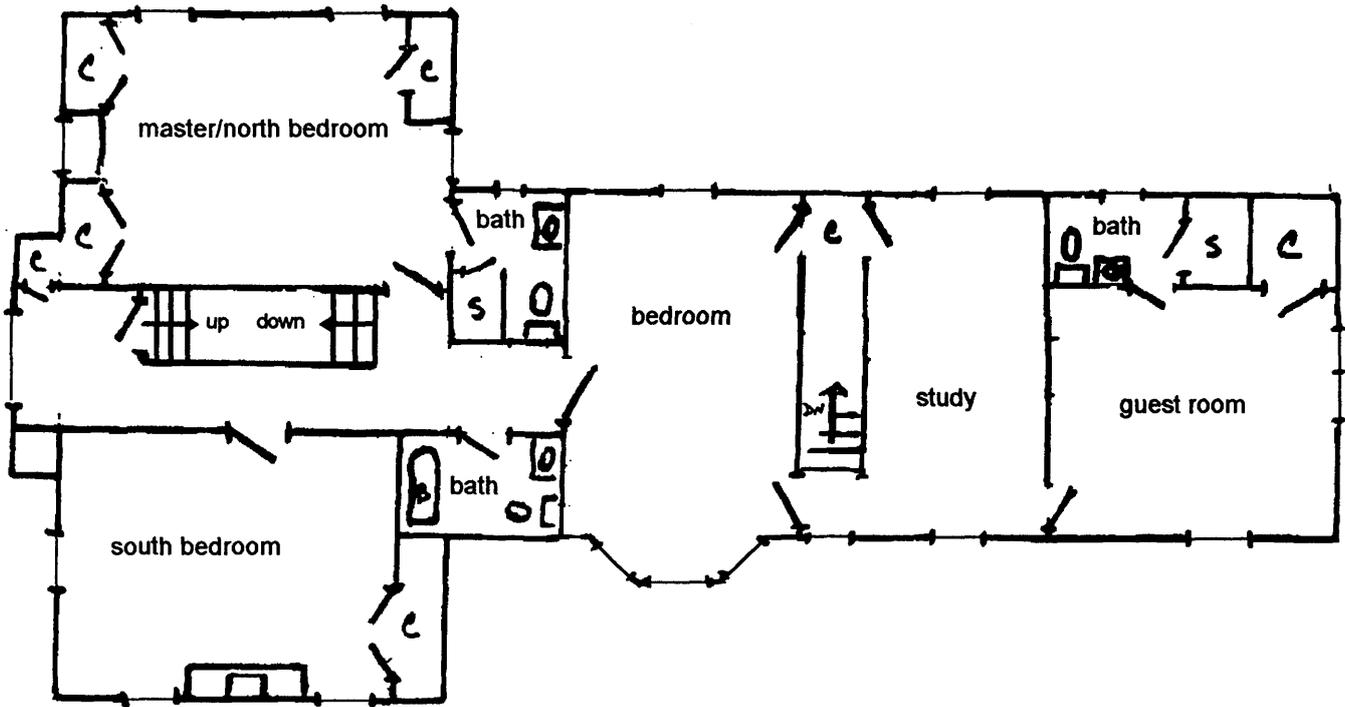
Atlantic County, New Jersey

**N**



## Second Floor

scale: 1/8" = 1'





# The Captain Francis Babcock House

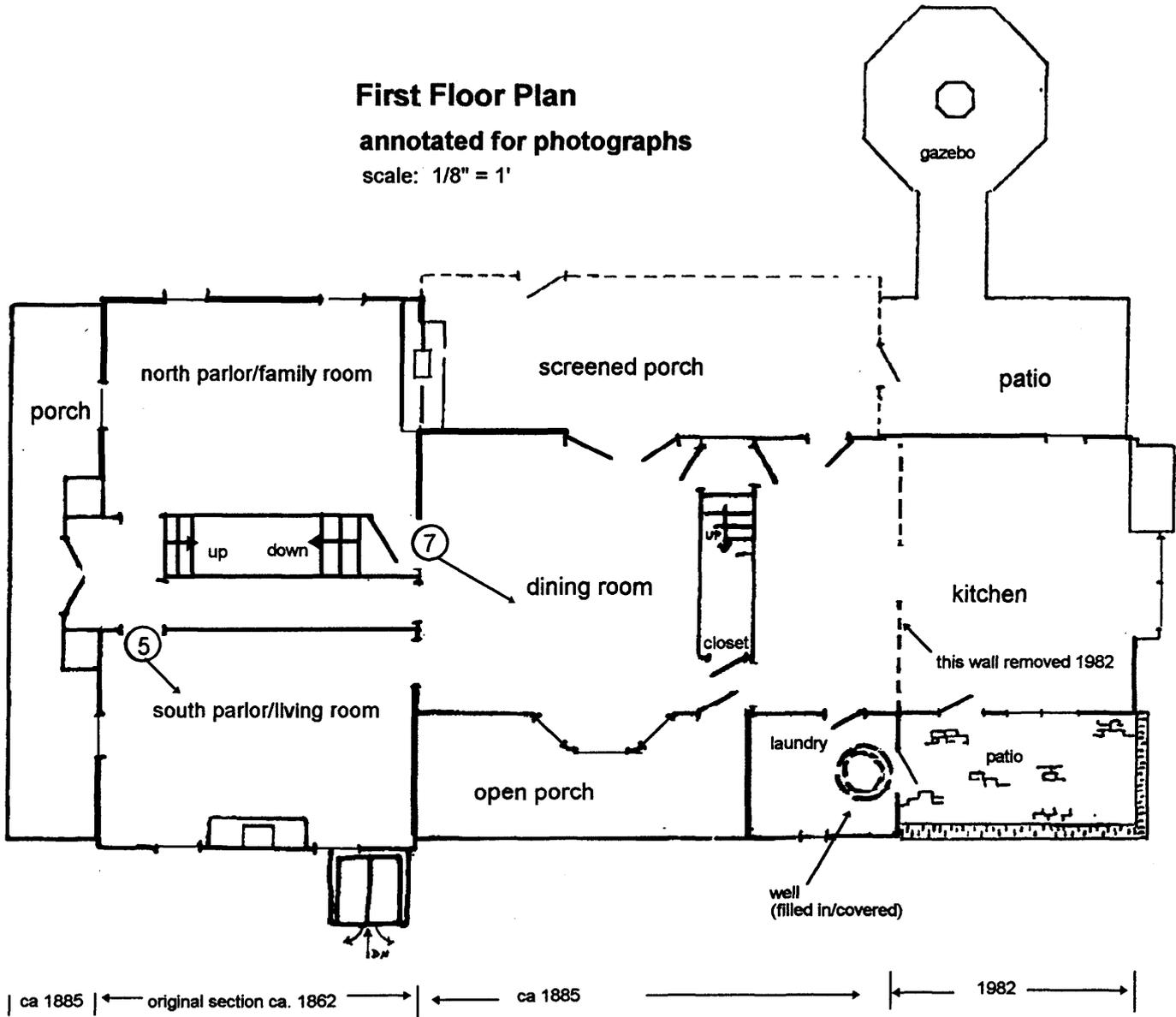
South Shore Road, Absecon

Atlantic County, New Jersey

## First Floor Plan

annotated for photographs

scale: 1/8" = 1'



N



# The Captain Francis Babcock House

South Shore Road, Absecon

Atlantic County, New Jersey

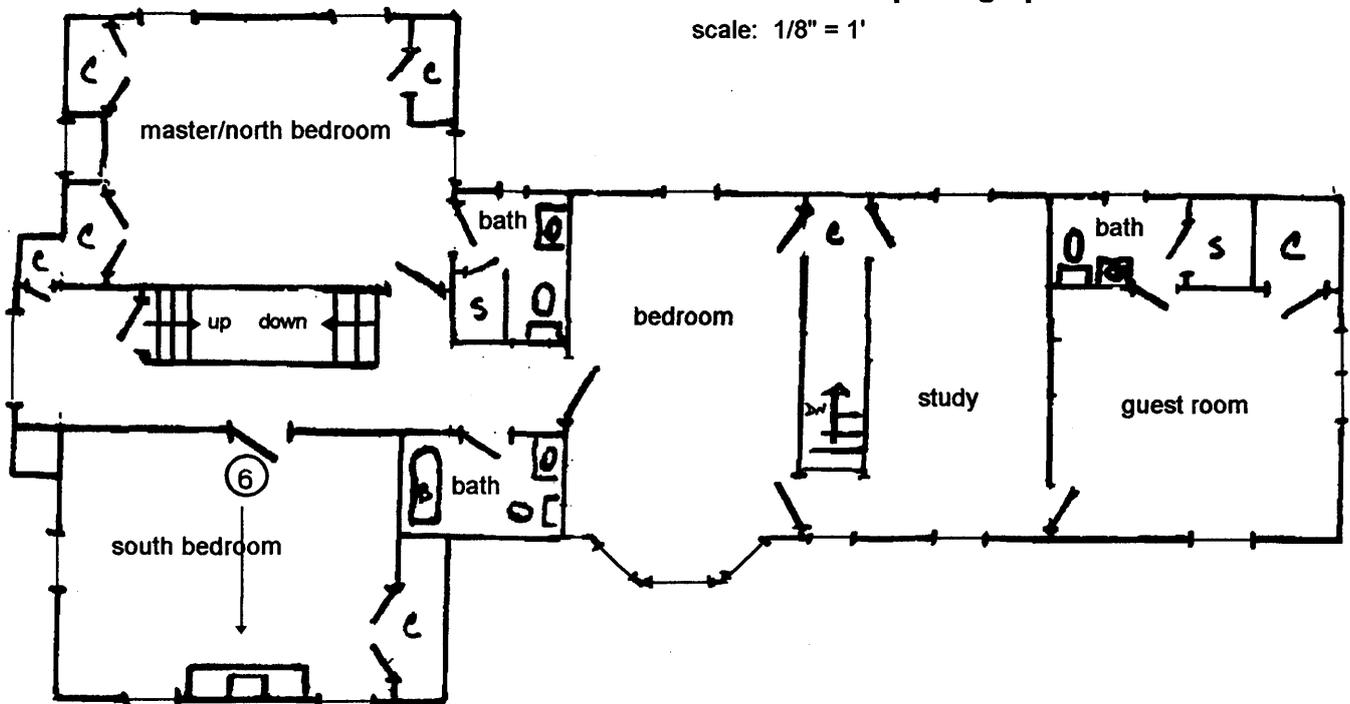
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## Second Floor

annotated for photographs

scale: 1/8" = 1'



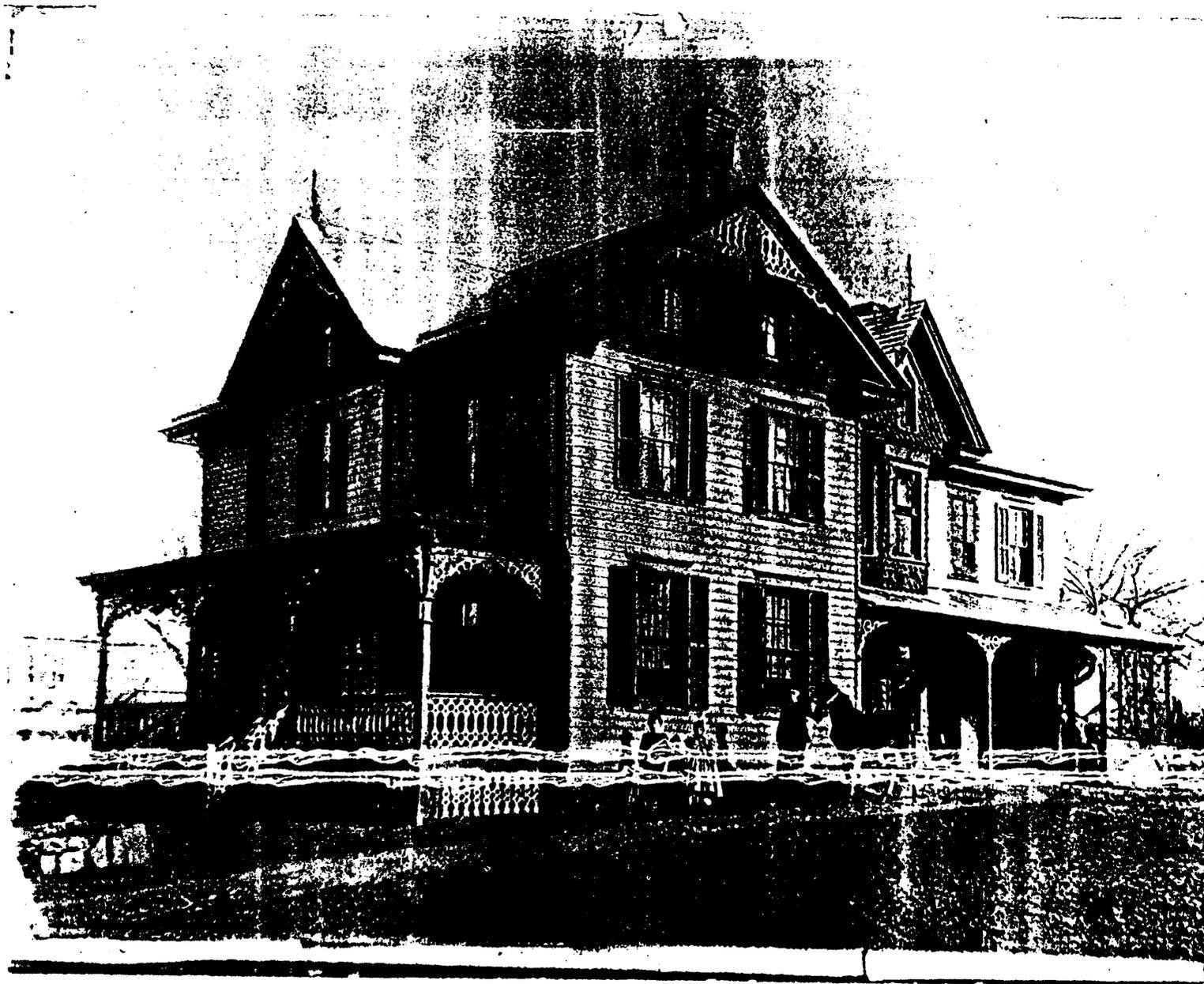
| ca 1885 |

← original section ca. 1862 →

ca 1885 →

← 1982 →





**Captain Francis Babcock House, ca. 1890**  
South Shore Road, Absecon, Atlantic County, NJ  
*The people are possibly Captain Babcock and two of his children.*

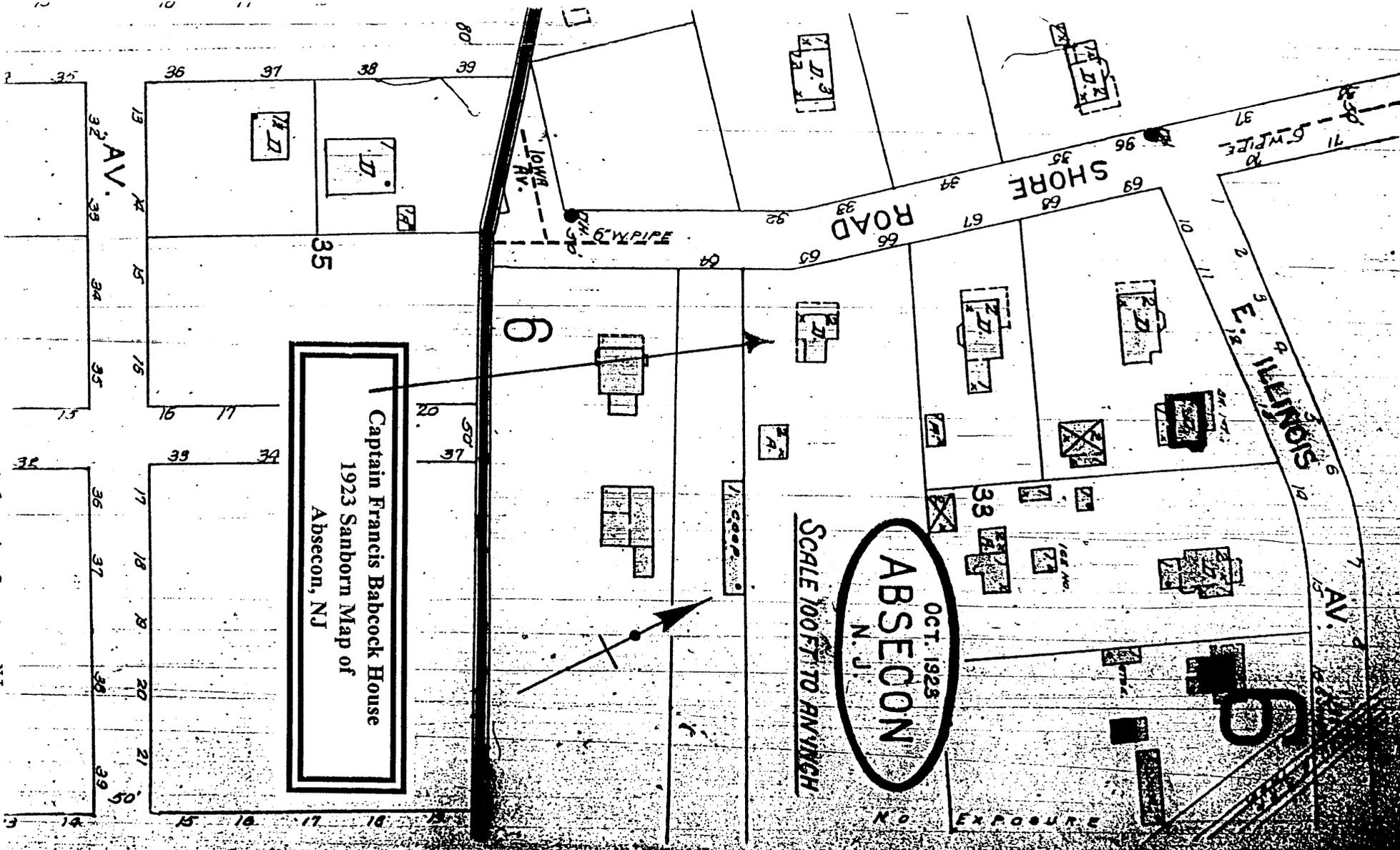
Atlantic County, NJ

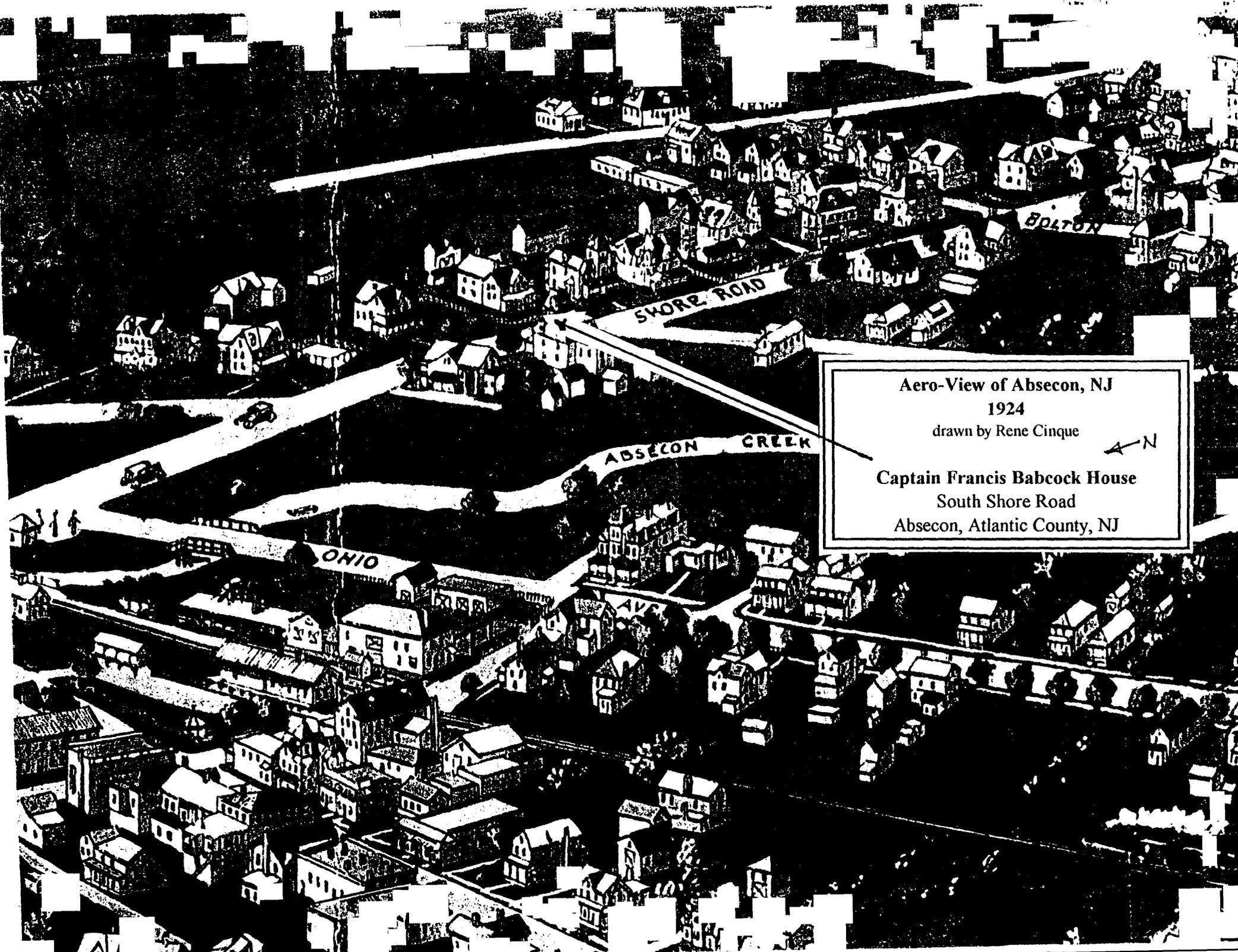
Captain Francis Babcock House  
1923 Sanborn Map of  
Absecon, NJ

OCT. 1923  
**ABSECON**  
N. J.

SCALE 100 FT TO AN INCH

NO EXPOSURE





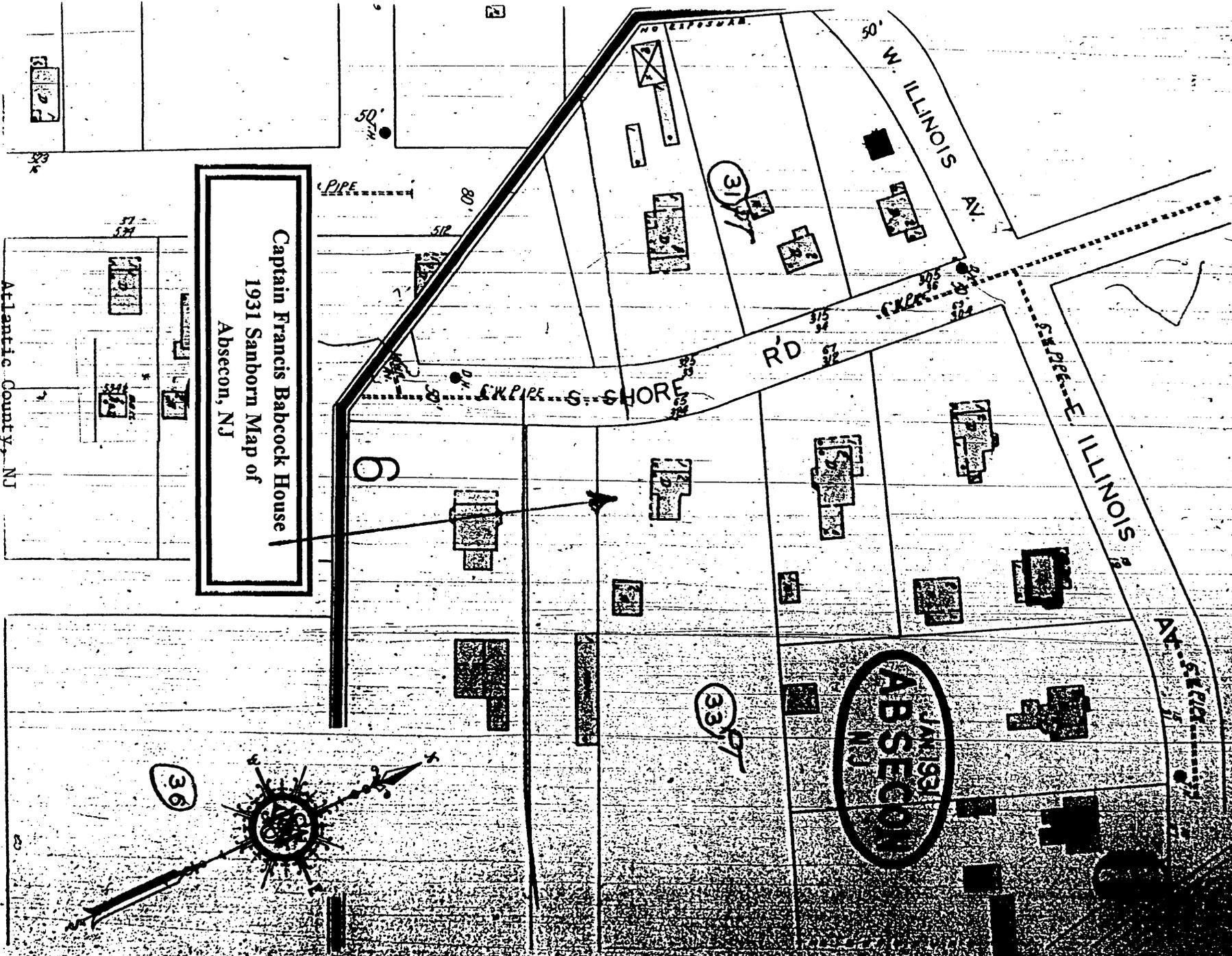
Aero-View of Absecon, NJ  
1924  
drawn by Rene Cinque

Captain Francis Babcock House  
South Shore Road  
Absecon, Atlantic County, NJ

← N

Atlantic County, NJ

Captain Francis Babcock House  
1931 Sanborn Map of  
Absecon, NJ



ABSECON  
JAN 1931

36

33

31

6

PIPE

SHORE RD

S. W. ILLINOIS AV.

S. ILLINOIS AV.

S. ILLINOIS AV.

Captain Francis Babcock House  
1931 Sanborn Map of  
Absecon, NJ