

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 10 1975  
DATE ENTERED NOV 21 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern

AND/OR COMMON Girl Scout Headquarters

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 1632 St. Georges Avenue

CITY, TOWN Rahway VICINITY OF 12th  
STATE New Jersey CODE 34 COUNTY Union CODE 039

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME The Rahway Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER 1670 Irving Street

CITY, TOWN Rahway VICINITY OF STATE New Jersey

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER Court House

CITY, TOWN Elizabeth STATE New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey; (New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory #2580.4)  
(NJ-36)

DATE 1937; 1970 X FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress; Historic Sites Section

CITY, TOWN Washington; Trenton STATE D. C.; New Jersey

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Description: Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern

#### EXTERIOR

This imposing frame building is 3 1/2 stories and five bays across the front. It measures 41' by 28' with a rear 1 1/2 story kitchen wing measuring 37' by 16'. The large section has a gambrel roof with four dormers on the front. These dormers have side pilasters and half round "Gothic" upper sash. The first floor windows are 8/12, and the second and third floor windows are 6/9 sash. A chimney stack rises up from each gable end.

#### INTERIOR

A center hall with a front and rear entrance has an open stair case in the rear. The bar room on one side of the hall has an exterior front entrance and an entrance from the hall. On the other side of the hall are double parlors (or dining room) each with a fireplace. The chimney stack on the bar room side has been removed. On the second floor is a large meeting room or ball room across the entire front. There are two smaller rooms to the rear. On both the third and fourth floors are five rooms. The kitchen wing has a cooking fireplace and bake oven. A winder stair leads to the loft rooms above.

On the cellar there is a definite break in the foundation wall, probably indicating an increase in width. The nonsymmetrical front facade might be the result of an increase in width of the building. The original structure appears to have been only two stories, probably third quarter 18th century. It was raised to 3 1/2 stories, probably first quarter 19th century.

Description: Terrill Tavern (on Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern site)

This structure has recently been moved to this site, having also been moved earlier in the 20th century. This section is only part of the original structure, possibly the kitchen wing. It measures 18' by 24' and is 1 1/2 stories. The first floor is one room with 6/9 sash. The large end wall fireplace has been rebuilt as has the stair case. The three loft rooms have vertical board walls and batten doors with HL hinges. The massive ceiling beams are hewn oak as are the rafters. The construction indicates a later 18th century building.

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Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern  
Rahway  
Union County New Jersey 034

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Description Addendum:

Terril Tavern was moved to the site in the early 20 th century, because of impending demolition. The section that is located on the property is only part of the original structure, possibly the kitchen wing. The remainder of the tavern was not saved from demolition by moving as this section was.

Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern and Terrill Tavern are not connected, but are located on the same property. Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern has a one and one-half story kitchen wing, original, which projects out the rear of the building.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Narrative

This old Tavern has played a significant part in the early History of Rahway. It has hosted many notables during the Revolutionary War, including Washington, Lafayette, and Abraham Clark, and served as a Stage House stop and change over spot for Horses on the Run to New Brunswick.

It is an imposing landmark in its height and location on a very busy intersection and provides an excellent opportunity of providing both a museum and meeting place, very much before the Public's eyes. It has played an important role in Rahway's History ever since its building.

The building has been measured and recorded in the Library of Congress thru the H.A.B.S. survey and displays many fine Fireplaces, Stair and original Kitchen wing.

When John Mercereau's "Flying Machine" made its bi-weekly trip from Paulus Hook to Philadelphia, over the King's Highway, the Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern was the first stop after leaving Elizabethtown in the morning. Old John would rein in his four horse hitch, near the entrance, snap his whip proudly and jumping from his seat announce to his passengers: "Raw-Waw! Rah-Haw! Merchants' and Drovers'. Place for refreshment. Highly commended."

A traveler would inquire the time allowed. "Ten minutes, sir. We travel accordin' to schedule; must be in Brunswick by noon, on the dot. Be at your ease. Enjoy the comforts of the tavern while you may. The Flying Machine is always on the dot, sir, always on the dot!"

In those days (1772-1775) John Anderson was the keeper of the tavern. He may also have been its builder. It is located on the King's Highway, where that ancient thoroughfare is crossed by the old post road to the village of West Fields. The property came into the possession of the Craig family through the marriage of Dr. Stuart Craig to Phoebe, daughter of John Anderson.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Former Owner: Mrs. Harold M. Searles, Rahway, New Jersey  
 Essex Co. Records (Frank P. Caufield) Exxes  
 Co. Office  
 Robert Erskins Map 1778  
 History of Union County - Riccards Map 1740  
 Revolutionary Scene in New Jersey by

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Robert Hoffman

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	56,04,0,0	4,49,621,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies city block #341, lots 7,9-15 and is approximately 200 feet by 400 feet in size.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

(Revisions by Nanci Kostrub Batchelor, OHP, Trenton, 609-292-2028)

NAME / TITLE

Charles H. Detwiler, A.I.A. - Restoration Architect

ORGANIZATION

Member A.I.A. Historic Resources Committee

DATE

October 1, 1974

STREET & NUMBER

120 Depot Park

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Plainfield

STATE

New Jersey 07060

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL XX

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*David J. Bond*

TITLE

Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

April 4, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*W. L. ...*

DATE

11/24/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*William ...*

DATE

Nov 16, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Historical Narrative cont'd

The tavern is located less than two blocks from where General William Maxwell routed the British at the Battle of Spanktown after driving them from Elizabethtown and Newark during the Revolutionary War.

George Washington stopped here in 1789 on his way to New York to be inaugurated as the First President. A historic marker across the street reads:

Here on April 23, 1789, on his way to New York City, Washington was received by troops from Elizabethtown and Newark. He was entertained at the inn kept by Samuel Smith by gentlemen of the town.

Significance Addendum:

Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern is the oldest still extant tavern in Rahway. It is a representative example of crossroads community tavern styles.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the tavern was one of the most important institutions in the country. They provided rest, food, and libation for weary travelers passing through an area.

The tavern was the second most important building in the community. Next to the church, the tavern provided a town or village with a central focus in which businesses and people could conduct their affairs and exchange ideas, being among the few structures open to the public. Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern fulfilled this need for a place to gather for both the townspeople and travelers of Rahway. Particularly throughout the Revolutionary War the tavern was widely used by people anxious to hear news of the war.

While an urban inn or tavern had a definite social hierarchy in which certain classes were excluded, the crossroads inns were not able to discriminate as freely and consequently entertained a more diversified clientele with merchants, travelers and gentlemen often sharing the same room, if not the same bed. Merchants' and Drovers' exemplifies this philosophy both in its name and its practice.

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Significance Addendum:Cont'd:

Architecture

Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern is significant because it is the oldest tavern still extant in Rahway and probably the only 18th century structure in situ in the town. The tavern is also important for its size. Built in the third quarter of the 18th century, it was originally 2 stories. Between 1790 and 1830 the building was enlarged to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  stories demonstrating the need for more space. This addition was well constructed and was done so as to be compatible with the original construction.

Merchants' and Drovers' Tavern is a good surviving example of a large corssroads tavern. It is possible the only extant 18th century structure in the town and the only surviving example of a tavern in Rahway, as such it merits inclusion in the National Register.

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Terrill Tavern

Terrill Tavern was moved to the sites in 1906 because of impending demolition. The building today reflects only part of the original, possibly the kitchen wing. The tavern was moved again in 1974. This was a reorientation on the same property. The building does exhibit some late 18th century characteristics, but has been altered and renovated several times. The building as it stands is not architecturally significant.