

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Aycrigg Mansion

and/or common Masonic Temple

2. Location

street & number Main Avenue and Temple Place N/A not for publication

city, town City of Passaic N/A vicinity of congressional district 8th

state New Jersey code 34 county Passaic code 031

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: social

4. Owner of Property

name Passaic Masonic Temple Association

street & number Main Avenue

city, town Passaic N/A vicinity of state New Jersey

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Passaic County Courthouse

street & number 317 Pennsylvania Avenue

city, town Paterson state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N.J. Historic Sites Inventory (#2377) & Historic American Buildings Survey
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1961 & 1930's federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of Cultural & Environmental Services

city, town Trenton state 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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built around 1848, the Aycrigg Mansion is a 2 1/2 story, 6 bay, center hall, rectangular building of coursed ashlar sandstone construction in the Italian Palazzo mode facing the Passaic River and situated atop a knoll.

Exterior

The building is constructed of native brownstone or sandstone which presents a rather plain, but well detailed facade. The stone blocks are finished in three distinct textures in order to create the desired visual effect. The sills at the window are a smooth finish. The stone used in the string course has been tooled, while the remainder of the exterior stone is rough cut. The stone used in the string course has weathered quite well, and the tool marks still present clear and sharp tool lines. The exterior stone work has been repointed in recent years and is in exceptionally good condition with little evidence of weather erosion.

The nicely proportioned facade of the building is distinguished by a rather simple but effective method of adding interest. The facades (on all four sides) are treated as a "panel" with large sections recessed into the building and framed by stone pilasters.

The windows are casement type - five feet wide and 11 feet 9 inches tall on the first floor while 6 1/2 feet high on the second floor. The lintels are wooden with simple moldings.

The simple wooden entablature surrounding the building is presently covered with brown colored aluminum, but the original carved wooden wreath windows incorporated in the entablature are still displayed. This ornate wreath motif is repeated in the interior detailing of the ballroom moldings.

In the early 1960's a hurricane destroyed the cupola, end chimneys, and standing seam tin roof of the building. In repairing the damage, the cupola and chimneys were removed because of their unsafe condition, and the hip roof was sheathed in fire resistant asphalt shingles.

The porch at the main entrance has an almost flat roof supported by four modern fluted wooden columns which have concrete bases setting atop the original stone pedestals. The original columns, as shown in the 1930's Historic American Building Survey records, were completely wooden from top to base. The wooden entablature surrounding the porch is presently covered with aluminum, but the HABS drawings show small wreaths along the simple frieze.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1848

Builder/Architect UNKNOWN

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

John Banker Aycrigg, a wealthy and prominent area physician, built this mansion around 1848. The only extant Italian palazzo mansion in the city and one of the finest examples in Passaic County, the house is further distinguished as the home of Benjamin Aycrigg, Passaic City's first mayor; classrooms for the Passaic Collegiate School (1899–1908); and headquarters for the Passaic Masonic Temple since 1908.

John Banker Aycrigg (1798–1856) was a practicing physician for nearly 50 years. Graduating from the College of Physicians and Surgeons (now Columbia University Medical Department) in 1818, he was then admitted to practice in New York City. Aycrigg moved to Paramus around 1825 and served two non-consecutive terms in Congress (1837–39; 1841–43) as a United State Representative (Whig) from the Bergen County District. Upon returning from Congress, Aycrigg built an elegant house in Passaic, New Jersey and lived here until his death in 1856. His wife, Jane Aycrigg, continued to live in the manor until her death in 1877. Although little has been written about Jane Aycrigg, her wealth and prominence is evident from the 40-page inventory of her estate.

Although Jane Aycrigg divided her property equally among her several children, the Aycrigg Mansion was apparently transferred to Benjamin Bogert Aycrigg (1842–1889). A physician like his father, Benjamin Aycrigg lived his entire life in the family mansion. He was also elected Passaic's first mayor when the city was officially incorporated in 1873. Benjamin Aycrigg was also an enthusiastic and high ranking official of the Fraternal Order of Freemasons.

The Passaic Collegiate School was a private college preparatory school. An integral part of Passaic City's educational institutions, the Passaic Collegiate School was formed in 1895 with a college preparatory curriculum. The school's enrollment was drawn from a five-county area of North Jersey and operated through 1970. From 1899 to 1909 the school's home was in the Aycrigg Mansion.

Aycrigg Mansion is presently owned by the Passaic Masonic Temple Association, a non-profit corporation formed in 1908 for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining the building. The Association is currently composed of representatives of three Masonic Lodges; Passaic Lodge #67, Lessing Lodge #189, and Equity Lodge #257, all coming under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New Jersey, headquartered in Burlington, New Jersey.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

10. Geographical Data UTM NOT VERIFIED ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property .764

Quadrangle name Weehawken Quadrangle- NJ

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References NY

A

1	8	5	7	3	7	5	9	4	5	2	2	3	2	9
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

The nominated property occupies City Block 235, Lot 30

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

Revised by T. Karschner 4/1981

name/title Terry Karschner, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Office of Cultural and Environmental Services date 5/1979

street & number 109 West State Street telephone (609) 292-2028

city or town Trenton state New Jersey

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Laura Schmidt

title date June 16, 1981

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>Alana Byers</u>	Entered in the National Register date <u>4/29/82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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Aycrigg Mansion
Continuation sheet Passaic, Passaic Co., NJ Item number 7 Page 1

Aycrigg Mansion
Continuation Sheet
Description - 1

Two large antlered deer of cast iron flank the brick entrance walk from Main Avenue. The deer, which are in a kneeling position, have cast iron bases. The art of casting iron was in vogue during the period of 1840-1850, and the statues were probably original ornaments.

The original cast iron railing which surrounded the rear stone porch became badly rusted and was removed and replaced by a nondescript wrought iron railing in the early 1960's.

Interior

The main floor of the Aycrigg Mansion has a wide (nearly 24 feet) center reception hall with a single large room at the west and three rooms to the east. All windows on the first floor have interior shutters which, when opened, form flush panels on each side of the window. All shutters in the building are in place and in good working condition. Ceilings are over 15 feet high. The floors are all comb grained pine.

The main staircase gracefully winds its way into the central hall. The balusters of the staircase are slender turned spindles of oak, and the handrail and moldings are of fine scale and detailing. The stairway woodwork is stained dark and varnished, while the remaining woodwork on the main floor of the building has been painted.

The ballroom/parlor on the first floor is an exceptionally fine space. The room measures 43' 6" by 23' 8", and is divided into two symmetrical and equal spaces by a ceiling header or lintel which matches the molding depth. The beam is supported on both sides by fluted wooden columns 16' high. These columns have a necking or collaring at the capital. This same style column was originally used to support the roof of the exterior porch (as evidenced by the HABS drawings). The deep cornice which surrounds each symmetrical half of the ballroom is classical in character, having carved wooden wreath medallions (reminiscent of the exterior wreath windows), carved egg and dart moldings, and deep cornice grooves.

The ballroom contains two white marble fireplaces which are distinctly early Victorian in character and typical of those built, particularly in the finer brownstone townhouses of Manhattan, between 1850-1860. The large pier mirrors located at each end of the ballroom, the

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Aycrigg Mansion
Continuation Sheet
Description - 2

drapery cornices at each window of the room, and the marble topped tables under each pier mirror are all hand carved in great detail and match the fireplaces in their early Victorian style. The cartouche which surmounts the arch of the fireplaces is repeated as a motif on the mirrors and their respective tables and on all window cornices. The same fireplaces and window cornices are also found in the reading room and card rooms of the building's first floor. The first floor plan is essentially unaltered.

The second (now top) floor of the building was completely altered in 1908 in order to create the large lodge room. The roof and its original structure were removed and wooden trusses spanning the width of the building were installed. This almost completely eliminated the third floor of the original building except for several small storage rooms and a balcony which surrounds the present lodge room. The lodge room itself is a large, nicely proportioned room of two stories surrounded on two opposite sides by a balcony. The room has a barrel vault plaster ceiling which gives it extremely good acoustic properties. At one end of the room, a proscenium arch, bordered in a plaster braid molding, frames a three stepped dais. A medium sized pipe organ (presently being reconstructed) is housed in the room with the exposed pipes attractively displayed over a wooden balconet on the wall opposite the proscenium. The character of the room is typical of auditorium construction of the early 20th century with wide, dark stained, oak woodwork and brass balcony railings.

The ground, or basement floor, has a large kitchen and assembly room and is completely utilitarian.

The environment of the Aycrigg Mansion has changed substantially over the years. It was a large estate overlooking the Passaic River in 1850, but presently has only 3/4 of an acre within a highly developed urban area of institutional and residential housing.

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Aycrigg Mansion
Continuation Sheet
Significance - 1

Freemasonry is a nonsectarian fraternal organization whose principles are based on the tenets of charity and brotherhood. The history of Freemasonry in New Jersey pre-dates the American Revolution, and the present Grand Lodge (State authority) was formed in 1788 and has operated continuously since then. All three Masonic lodges in Passaic contribute regularly to the State-wide charitable projects of the Masonic fraternity. These charities include the Masonic Home and Charity Foundation which maintains a 250 patient nursing home and geriatrics infirmary at Burlington, New Jersey; the largest organizational blood bank in New Jersey providing blood to nonmembers as well as Masons; a community charity foundation providing emergency awards only to nonmembers at a rate of approximately \$25,000 per year; a state-wide college scholarship program exceeding \$50,000 per year; and sponsorship of the Junior Wheelchair Track and Field Meet held annually at Metuchen High School (a pioneer program for handicapped children for the East Coast region). In addition to the charities which are conducted on a State level, the three lodges are actively involved in local projects which they individually select.

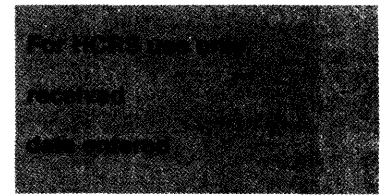
Of the three separate lodges in the Passaic Masonic Temple, Passaic Lodge #67 is the oldest, having been formed in 1865 and having operated continuously within the city since that time. It currently has 365 members. The lodge remains active, not only in state Masonic charities and function, but also in community related projects. In 1975 the Lodge received the Grand Master's Community Service Award for its contributions not only monetarily but in terms of time and effort for its support of numerous local funds.

Lessing Lodge #189 was established in 1908, and has occupied the present Masonic Temple in all of its 71 year history. Originally, Lessing Lodge conducted its meetings and kept its records entirely in the German language. In 1919 the Grand Lodge of New Jersey required all foreign language lodges in the state to operate only in English, and Lessing Lodge ceased to operate as an "ethnic" German lodge. Its present multiethnic membership now numbers 173, and the Lodge has shown a steady increase in membership in the past few years.

Equity Lodge #257 is the youngest of the lodges in the Passaic Masonic Temple, having been founded in 1925. With a membership of 420 it is the largest of the three lodges. The Lodge was formed as an "ethnic" lodge serving the Jewish community of Passaic, and its activities essentially remain tied to the Jewish traditions.

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Aycrigg Mansion
Continuation Sheet
Significance - 2

In addition to the three Masonic lodges, the building serves as the home of three women's organizations: Stella Chapter, Order of Eastern Star; Golden Rod Chapter, Order of Eastern Star; and Imperial Court, Order of Amaranth. All of these organizations have state and local charitable programs similar to those of the lodges.

The membership of the Masonic organizations occupying the Passaic Masonic Temple has actively served the community of Passaic for more than a century. Many mayors, councilmen, and civic leaders in the community have been members of the lodges.

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Continuation Sheet
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Continuation Sheet
Bibliography - 2

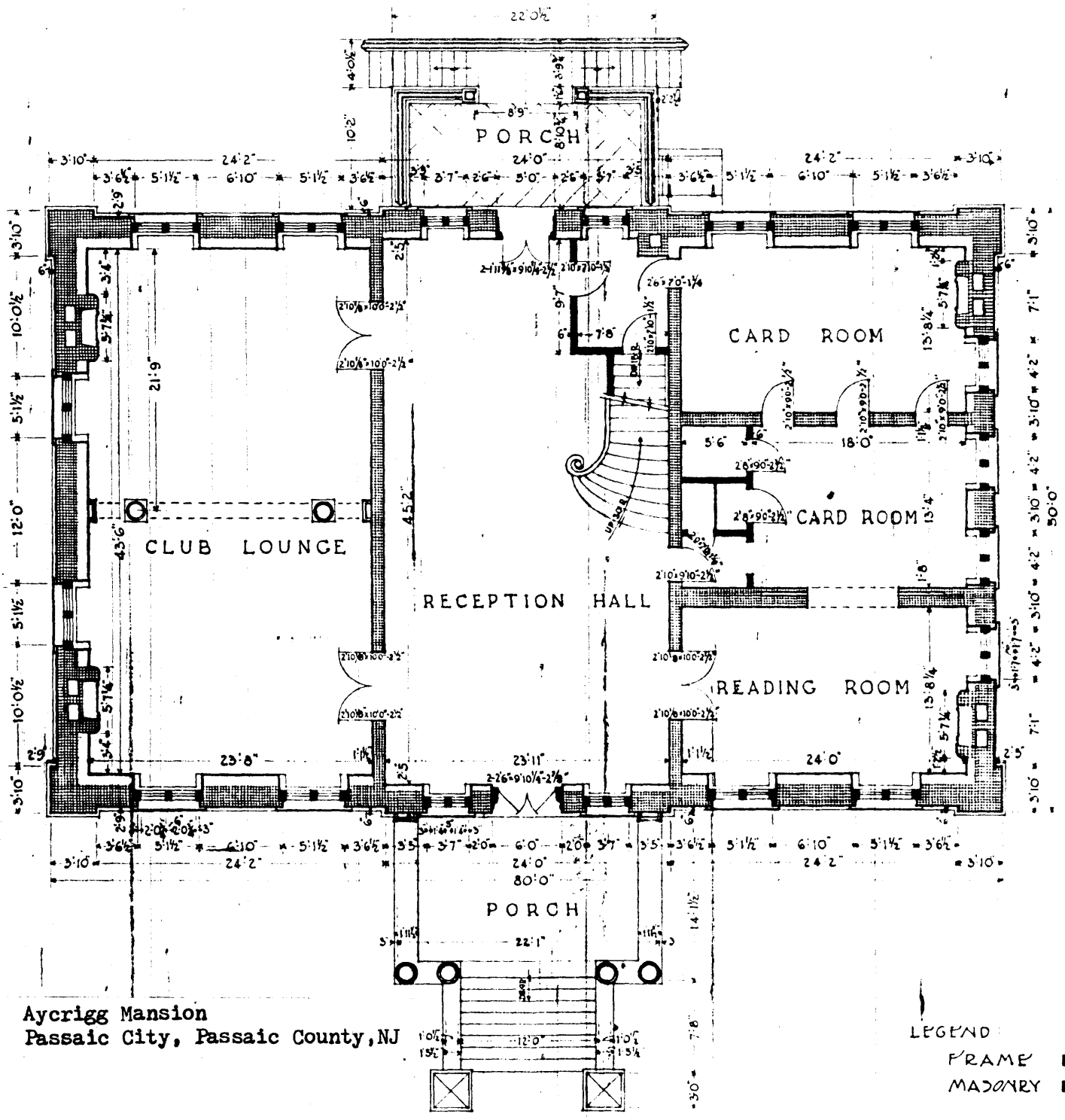
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Wills - Passaic County

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Jane Aycrigg. 1877. (1768 P)
Benjamin Aycrigg. 1899. (3233 P)

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FIRST STORY PLAN

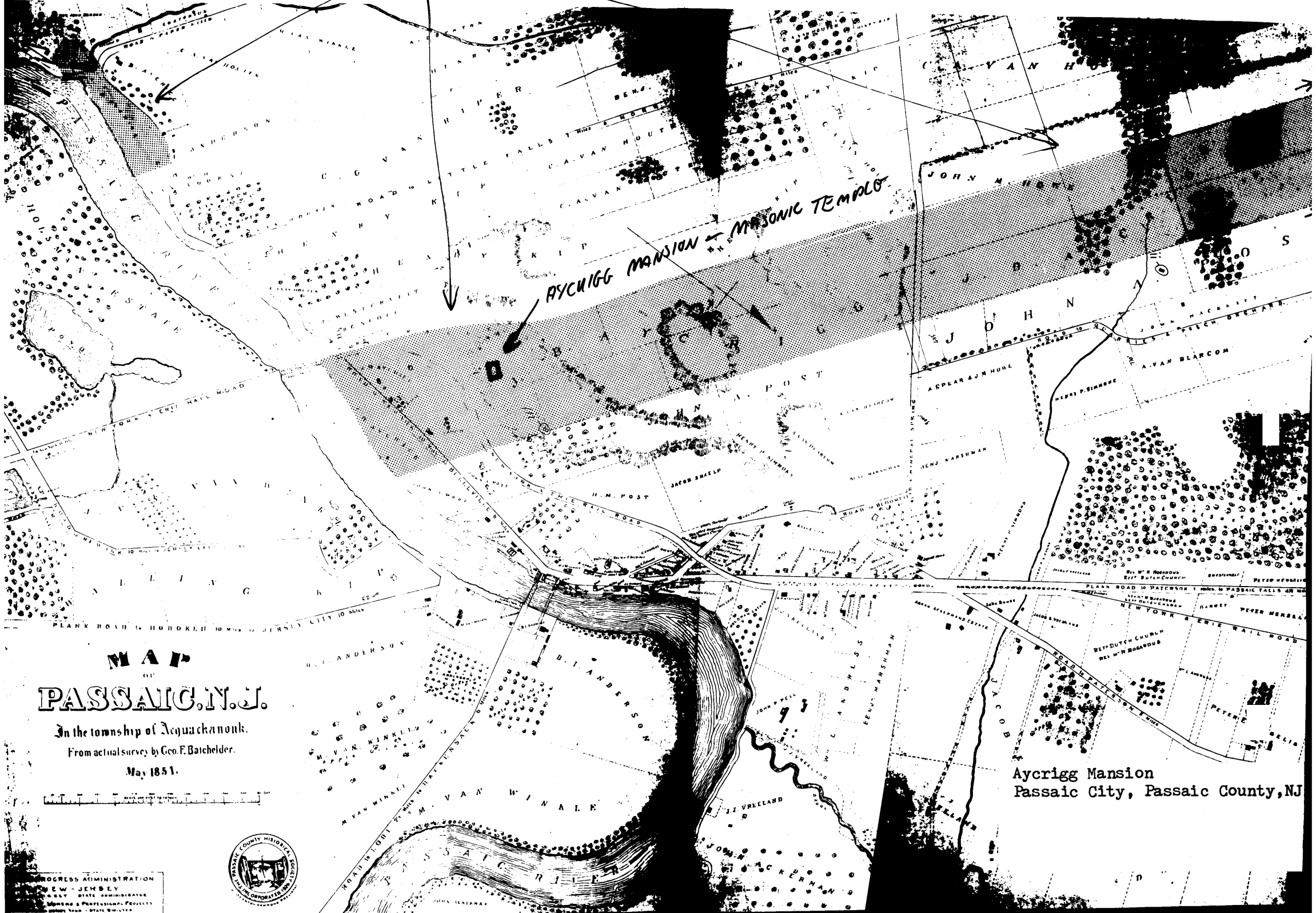
1/8" = 1'0"
 METRIC

NAME OF STRUCTURE
THE AYCCRIGG MANSION
 MAIN AVENUE, PASSAIC, N.J.



SURVEY NO.
NJ.413

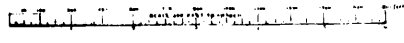
SHADED AREA IS AYCRIGG PROPERTY



AYCRIGG MANSION - MASONIC TEMPLE

MAP OF PASSAIC, N.J.

In the township of Acquackanonk.
From actual surveys by Geo. F. Batchelder.
May 1851.



Aycrigg Mansion
Passaic City, Passaic County, NJ



PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
NEW JERSEY
NEW JERSEY STATE ADMINISTRATOR
MONITOR & PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS
1000 N. 10TH ST. - STATE HOUSE