Dr. Allen was born on March 30, 1801 near Chelsea, Vermont. He received his medical degree from Dartmouth Medical School in 1828. He traveled west to set up his practice. He came to New Salem in the year 1830 and began to practice medicine there.

In 1831 he bought lots three and four, south of Main Street in the town of New Salem. In 1835 he bought the east ½ of lot one that was adjoining lot four on the west. The records show that his house was built somewhere around 1833 or the early part of 1834.

John Allen married Mary E. Moore on March 27, 1834. They lived in their three room house which he had built. The home had three rooms with a basement under the largest room. There was a fireplace in the center between the two northern rooms. The fireplace was made entirely of stone, for two reasons: first, because stone prevented fire hazards, and second, because it was more expensive, and we know that Dr. Allen could have afforded this type of fireplace and chimney. There were two windows, one just west of the main door and another on the east wall. There were two more windows located on the south walls where the weather was mildest. One was in the bedroom and the other in the office. The floors were made of sawn plank boards. It is shown that there was a second door leading from the living room to the rear yard. It was one of the better homes in the village. Mr. Allen was very precise about everything that he did. The silk hat and the well-made saddlebags of John Allen, still in existence, show that he was accustomed to having the finer things in life. John Allen was said to have been an interesting person and his character had much to do with the character of his home.

At his home, he established the first, and possibly the only Sunday School. He organized the Temperance Society. Reverend William Berry was said to have preached here often. John Allen was an active Presbyterian and a participant in the local debating society. Dr. Allen was a very religious man and used his beliefs in faith to help heal his patients. If Dr. Allen’s patients could not pay he would take his pay in produce.
Dr. Allen's wife died in 1836, only two years after they were married. Dr. Allen lived in the house until 1840 until he re-married and moved to Petersburg where he practiced medicine. He died April 1, 1863. There is no mention of John Allen having any children.

The Allen residence in New Salem was home to three different families from 1833-1842. There is no record of the house ever being moved. It was said to have been wrecked. Soon after 1842, Mr. Bale’s crops were growing over its site.