United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number A11

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20. Name: Cape House

Location: 316 West Hopkins Street

Classification: Category - building; Ownership - private; Status - occupied;

Accessible - yes, restricted; Present use - private residence.

Owner of property: Mrs. Don Ennis

Springlake Hills

San Marcos, Texas 78666

Description: Condition - good; Altered (slightly); Original site.

John Cape had his frame house of two stories plus attic built in a pleasing balance of asymmetry (a typical Victorian floor plan) and symmetry (a porch that sheaths three sides of the house and disguises its variety). On the east is a porte-cochere on square wood pillars that shelters a porch stair facing north and supports a screened sleeping porch. Under a central hip, with two chimneys, ells under cross gables extend to the east, west, and south, each with original doors opening to both porch levels. The house is painted white; roof material is corrugated metal.

Unusual in its simplicity, the porch substitutes alternating plain and beaded boards for elaborate gingerbread trim. Spindles form small brackets, the porch supports, and balustrades. The porch ceilings are painted sky blue. Shallow pavilion extensions mark stair entrances to the porch on east, west, and south. On the rear facade small screened porches are located on both floors.

Windows, under small classical cornice moldings, mainly have two-over-two lights, though a few have one-over-one. A keyhole window at the entrance is trimmed in colored glass. The southern gable end contains a small Palladian arrangement of windows.

A heavy, carved, and coffered stair is the best feature of the interior. Also notable are the living-room fireplace, the built-in china cabinet of the dining room, several operable pocket doors, bullseye moldings, and the beaded walls and ceilings still found in a bedroom, a bathroom, and the kitchen. One fireplace has been modernized and some surfaces have been obscured, but otherwise the interior is intact and impressive. Exterior alterations are almost nonexistent. Porch enclosures date from early in the history of the house.

Also on the lot is a garage apartment. It is not significant but does not detract from the main view of the house.

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Significance: Period - 1800-1899, 1900-; Areas of significance - architecture, commerce, industry, law. Specific dates -c.1898. Horace Leffingwell and sons, contractors.

J.M. Cape built the house at 316 West Hopkins in about 1898. It is one of the most spectacular Victorian residences in the town. Many hallmarks of the late 19th century are in evidence: asymmetrical massing, abundant wooden details, and a penchant for gracious living accented by the double-level porch that shelters the house on three sides. Local craftsman Horace Leffingwell and his sons performed the work.

Such a home was only proper for the prominent family. John Cape had walked from New York to Texas when only 15 years old. In 1880, he inherited all the property of a local miller he had befriended and assisted in his business, thus assuring his wealth and success. Cape was San Marcos' first postmaster and major cotton ginner. His wife, Mary Bales, daughter of Samuel Blue Bales, gave birth to all six of their children in this house. The eldest, Edward Matthew, grew up to be a renowned attorney and an officer of State Bank and Trust. His degree in civil engineering enabled him to instigate formation of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and construction of Canyon Dam, in the next county. Cape's influence was critical in getting Gary Air Force Base established at San Marcos. In 1968, he donated 2,500 volumes from his personal library to Southwest Texas State University. Lyndon Johnson had often studied in the same collection, and was a frequent overnight guest of Cape and his wife Clara Louise.

A Cape family descendant presently owns the home.

Bibliography:

Mary Ann Ennis, unpublished narrative written March 1982. On file at San Marcos Public Library.

Interview with Clara Louise Cape, June 24, 1982. San Marcos Record, July 6, 1972, and August 8, 1968.

Geographical data: Acreage - approximately one acre

UTM reference - A 14 / 601950 / 3306100

Verbal Boundary Description - Original Town Site, Block 17, Lots 3 and 4.

WASO Form - 177 ("R" June 1984)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Cape House (S	an Marcos MRA)					
Hays County						
TEXAS					11/05	
				Working No.	7-14-83	
				Fed. Reg. Da	ite: 21/184	
				Date Due: _	8/11/83-8/28/83	
				Action: _	-ACCEPT 8/26/83	
resubmission			Entered 3	in the	RETURN	
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owner objection				Federal Agen	ncy:	
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Substantive Review:	□ sample □ re	quest	appeal	□N	IR decision	
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance						
summary paragraph						
completeness						
clarity						
alterations/integrity	/					
dates						
boundary selection						

8. Significance	TO AND SAFETY TO SEE	1. 17 cm
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Specific dates Builder/Architect		
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9. Major Bibliographical References		
10. Geographical Data		
Acreage of nominated property		
Quadrangle name		
UTM References		
Verbal boundary description and justification		
11. Form Prepared By		
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification	and the second	
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State Historic Preservation Officer signature		
title date		
13. Other		
Maps		
☐ Photographs		
Other		
Questions concerning this nomination may be directed	to	
Signed	Date	Phone:



Photo by Lissa Anderson, January, 1983. Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

South facade, camera facing north. Photo 80 of 150.



Photo by Lissa Anderson, May, 1982. Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

South facade, camera facing northeast. Photo 81 of 150.

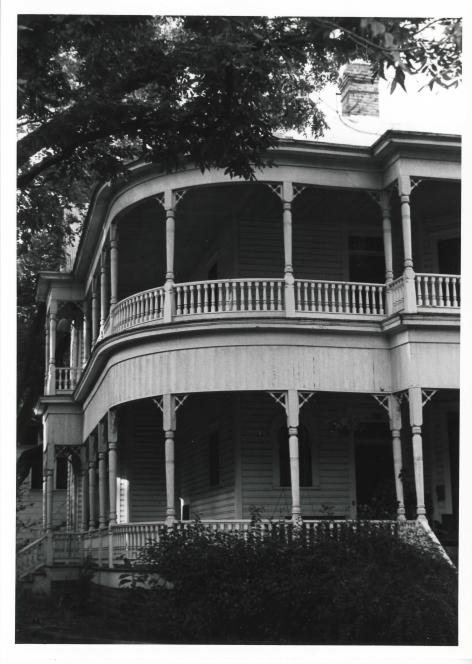


Photo by Lissa Anderson, May, 1982. Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

Detail of south facade, camera facing north. Photo 82 of 150.

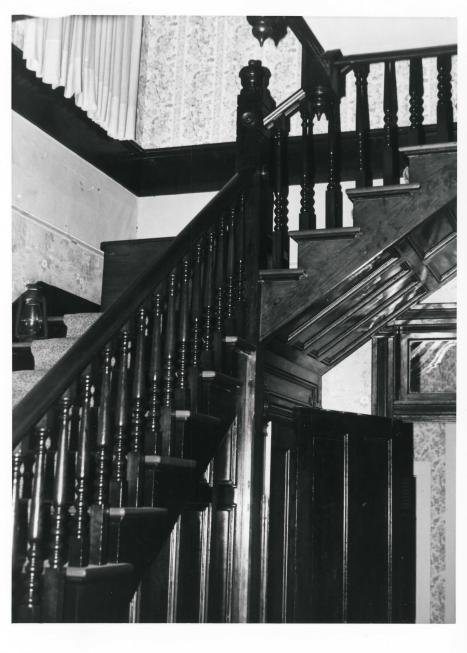


Photo by Lissa Anderson, May, 1982. Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

Stair in entry hall. Photo 83 of 150.



Photo by Lissa Anderson, May, 1982. Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

Keyhole window inentry hall. Photo 84 of 150.

Please refer to the map in the Multiple Property Cover Sheet for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000853