

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number All

Page 43

20. Name: <sup>✓</sup>Cape House

Location: <sup>✓</sup>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, eaves 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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number All

Page 44

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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Cape House (San Marcos MRA)  
Hays County  
TEXAS

Working No. 7-14-83  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.7.84  
Date Due: 8/11/83 - 8/25/83  
Action:  ACCEPT 8/26/83  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location \_\_\_\_\_

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description \_\_\_\_\_

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

---

**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

---

**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**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet*



Historic Resources of San Marcos  
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

#20. Cape House

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

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



Historic Resources of San Marcos  
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

#20. Cape House

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

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





Historic Resources of San Marcos  
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

#20. Cape House

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.



Historic Resources of San Marcos  
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

#20. Cape House

Photo by Lissa Anderson, May, 1982.

Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

Stair in entry hall.

Photo 83 of 150.



Historic Resources of San Marcos  
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

#20. Cape House

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

Keyhole window in entry 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