

**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

For HCERS use only

received **AUG 6 1979**
date entered **OCT 25 1979**

1. Name

historic Bridges-Johnson House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1.6 miles southwest of Meridian on ^{off TX 6} unnamed country road not for publication

city, town Meridian vicinity of congressional district 11

state Texas code 048 county Bosque code 035

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Richard D. Bass

street & number 1150 Mercantile Building

city, town Dallas _____ vicinity of state Texas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Clerk, Bosque County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Meridian state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October, 1976 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

7. Description

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

Located among the rolling hills surrounding the town of Meridian, the Johnson-Bridges House was built around 1860 upon a unique concept which was developed by its builder to ameliorate the hot climate. It was based on the plan of the dog-trot cabin, wherein two rooms were separated by a breezeway, all under a common roof. During the hot months, the prevailing breezes cooled the dog trot, which opened to the east and west. However, rather than incorporating rectangular rooms, the builder employed octagonal ones. To provide efficient ventilation of the rooms, doors were placed in the sides facing the breezeway, and in the north and south sides of each room. Fireplaces were constructed on the extreme east and west ends. In the two sides flanking the fireplaces were situated windows with six over six sashes. The sides which were oblique to the breezeway contained window openings closed by wooden shutters swinging upon iron hinges. Thus each of the eight sides of each octagon has an opening of some type. Ceilings were high to allow hot air to rise.

Other significance is apparent in the wall construction. Rather than using the log construction that typified so many dog trot cabins throughout the south, the builder employed lime concrete. Above a stone foundation which extended several inches beyond the wall line on both inside and out, the walls were formed in layers about twelve inches high. The bottoms of the forms were secured by nails driven through the boards into 3/4 by 3/4 inch wooden strips located about twelve inches from the corners, perpendicular to the faces of the walls. These strips remained in place after the forms were removed and are still visible today. The mixture placed into these forms consisted of lime, sand, and large aggregate of broken limestone. This building is one of three known structures in the vicinity of Meridian incorporating this type of wall construction, but is the only remaining example.

Fireplaces were constructed of limestone laid in random ashlar pattern. On the interior the facing, back, and sides of the fireplace were comprised of carefully cut limestone slabs. Other details of construction were finely executed. Sashes were assembled with mortise and tenon joints secured with wooden pegs. Muntins were planed to delicate profiles, about three-eighths of an inch by one inch. The cornice was boxed with a seven inch projection. Shutters and doors were built with boards nailed to horizontal cross members, each with a diagonal brace.

The floor and roof constructions also are noteworthy. Floor joists are cedar logs with the tops hewn flat to receive one-by-six tongue and groove flooring. These joists are supported at the centers of the rooms by large logs extending east to west, and by the stone foundation of the perimeter. The roof structure consists of rough-sawn joists and rafters. Shingles cover the roof; the original layer appears to exist beneath several additional layers. The ceiling is composed of thin tongue and groove beaded boards.

Although simple in design, wooden fireplace trim adds to the character of the interiors. Comprised of boards about one inch thick, the design emulates pilasters supporting an entablature.

Although the date of construction is not known, a porch was placed along the south side to protect the walls from the hot sun and to provide a cool place for sitting during the evenings. This simple frame construction with shingled roof has since collapsed.

Additions of unknown dates were made to the dwelling. Walls covered with clapboards were erected on the east and west sides of the breezeway, enclosing another room; pairs of four-panel doors provided access to this central hall from the exterior. A two room addition of box and strip construction was made to the west side of the south octagon. Adjacent to the breezeway, two closets, triangular in plan were made on southwest and northwest sides of the octagonal rooms.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input 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 1861 **Builder/Architect** W. H. Bridges

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bridges-Johnson House is rare in both plan and construction technique. Concrete octagonal rooms flanking a breezeway are unique among the known extant buildings in Texas. Although lime concrete was used along the Gulf Coast prior to the Civil War, it was rare in the sparsely settled, inland regions. Octagonal forms for residences is practically unknown in Texas, unlike the northeastern states, which can boast many examples. The house represents an innovative local adaptation of a distantly popular style.

At the time the house was erected the town of Meridian was only about six years old. It had been laid out by George B. Erath, an immigrant from Austria who had been prominent in Texas military activities. However, the town was not incorporated until 1874. Later in the century numerous Norwegian immigrants settled in the rural areas surrounding Meridian.

According to the Deed Records of Bosque County, W. H. Bridges purchased thirty-six acres of land from John Abney for \$146 in 1861. Bridges was a physician who had moved to Texas from Georgia. In 1862 this same acreage was sold to Alfred Fine and his wife, Rachel for the sum of \$1100. This increase in property value indicates the construction of the double octagon house. The property then changed ownership several times before W.T. Johnson purchased it in 1882. The house remained in the Johnson family until 1965 when it was purchased by Jack Kirbey. Several years later the present owner, Richard D. Bass, a wealthy oilman, acquired the property.

Possibly the builder of the unusual dwelling was familiar with octagonal buildings elsewhere in the state of Texas as well as the United States. Orson Squire Fowler, a Phrenologist, made the octagonal mode known through his 1848 book, A Home for All, or a New Cheap, Convenient, and Superior Mode of Building. In this volume, octagonal construction was described. In addition, walls formed with a mixture of water, lime, gravel, and sand were described in the latter volume, similar to the type used in the double octagon near Meridian.

Within the state, other examples of the octagonal mode appeared in the president's house Baylor University, Independence, and in the Tarrant County Courthouse of 1876 in Fort Worth. Neither of these buildings exist today.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bosque County Deed Records; Vol. E., p. 195,312,323; Vol. F, p. 403; Vol. K. p. 89; Vol. U. p. 425.
 Webb, Walter Prescott; The Handbook of Texas, Vol. II; Austin, Texas State Historical Association, 1952

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approximately three
 Quadrangle name Meridian, Texas Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>14</u>	<u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>17</u> <u>1</u> <u>12</u> <u>15</u>	<u>3</u> <u>15</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u>	B					
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing		
C				D					
E				F					
G				H					

Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated property is enclosed by a fence measuring approximately 400' on each side.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Willard B. Robinson, Professor of Architecture
 organization Texas Tech University date July 23, 1979
 street & number P.O. Box 4140 telephone 806-742-2789
 city or town Lubbock state Texas

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *[Signature]*
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 30, 1979

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
Carol Shuck date 10-25-79
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: *Beth Groves* date 10/25/79
 Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

AUG 6 1979

DATE ENTERED

OCT 25 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER

10

PAGE

1

White, John I.; "Happiness Was an Octagon," American Vignettes. Convent Station,
New Jersey, 1976, pp. 37-40.

Property

Bridges - Johnson House

State

Tx. (Basque)

Working Number

8.6.79.1885

79003447

TECHNICAL

Photos 5

Maps 1

CONTROL

OK 8.7.79 ^{pl}

an octagon dog-hut!! unique in design and construction in TX. Good nomination, except for VBD. CALL

marvelous property W.R. Luce

accept 10/25/79 case, then accept Grosvena 10/11/79

HISTORIAN

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

A unique adaptation of the octagon mode to the regional "dog-hut" cabin form, this house is also unusual in its use of lime concrete as a major building material. Needs more precise boundary description. Cf nomination for Sequin, Tx

Needs boundary description with some legal standing, on its merits, accept (after getting boundary info) KO'C 10/3/79

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

accept
B. Grosvena
10/25/79

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

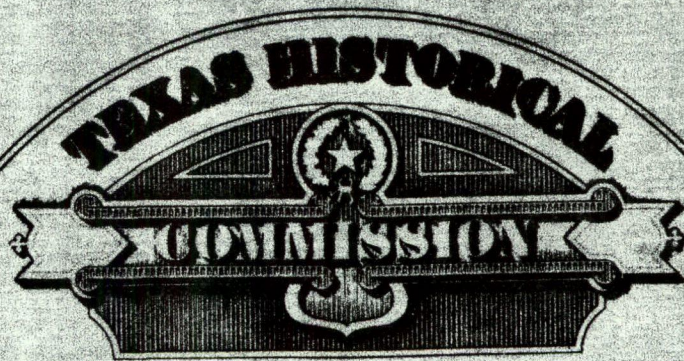
National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered OCT 25 1979

Federal Register Entry 12.4.79

Re-submit _____



TRUETT LATIMER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

P. O. BOX 12276
AUSTIN TEXAS 78711

June 11, 1981

Carol Ebright, Joy Bush
HCERS
National Register Department
Pension Building
440 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20243

Carol, Joy,

As mentioned on the phone to Carol this week, another list of Item 10 corrections for previous NR listings from Texas has been compiled. A copy is enclosed for your records. In each case the readings were off slightly on the original forms or the maps have been changed slightly by the USGS revisions.

Thank you for the call on Ft. Anahuac, the local committee will be very pleased when everything is finalized. We have pretty much gone through all of the files, so I don't think there will be too many more corrections. Hope all is well with you.

Sincerely,

Ulrich Kleinschmidt
National Register Archeologist
Texas Historical Commission.

JUN 11 1981

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page

Item #10 corrections for:

Walker Ranch - Bexar County (2/24/75)

USGS Castle Hills has UTM listed, although old form has only latitude/longitude. The UTM's have incorrect listing for Point (D), which should read: Z14/E548062/N326950 to conform to the mapped rectangle.

Lake Theo Folsom Site Complex - Briscoe County (4/28/75)

Map correct as originally shown. UTM's listed incorrectly. Should be:

- A) 14/ 3 08 425 / 38 10 640
- B) 14/ 3 12 360 / 38 10 580
- C) 14/ 3 12 360 / 38 09 440
- D) 14/ 3 08 415 / 38 09 540

Bridges-Johnson House - Meridian vicinity, Bosque County (10/25/79)

USGS map has changed and UTM location is now: Z 14/ 6 26 260 / 35 30 660

Bowie County Courthouse and Jail - New Boston, Bowie County (11/16/77)

UTM should read: 15/ 3 67 850 / 37 01 025

Saenger Theater - Texarkana, Bowie County (7/12/78)

UTM should read: 15/4 02 880 / 36 98 300

First National Bank Building - Meridian, Bosque County (11/7/79)

USGS 7.5 map lines for UTM's have changed with 1979 photo revision. Therefore 1981 location by UTM coordinates reads: 14/ 6 27 000 / 35 32 440

Varner-Hogg Plantation - West Columbia vicinity, Brazoria County (4/9/80)

- A) 15/ 2 42 890 / 32 29 030
- B) 15/ 2 43 260 / 32 29 230
- C) 15/ 2 43 610 / 32 28 610
- D) 15/ 2 43 380 / 32 28 200

Bryan Carnegie Library - Bryan, Brazos County (10/27/76)

A) 14/ 7 51 660 / 33 96 180

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

Corrections continued -

Santa Fe Railroad Station - Brownwood, Brown County (1/2/76)

UTM never listed, it is: A) 14/ 5 01 920 / 35 08 765

St. John's Episcopal Church - Brownwood, Brown County (9/4/79)

A) 14/ 5 01 420 / 35 09 100

Bishop Site - Salt Gap vicinity, Concho County (6/17/77)

Typo: should be 14/ 4 41 300 / 34 63 000



Bridges-Johnson House

Rural Site, 1.6 mi. southwest of Meridian

Meridian, Bosque County, Texas

Photo: Texas Historical Commission, 10/76

East Elevation

Photo # 145

AUG 6 1979

002
OCT 25 1979



Bridges-Johnson House

Rural Site, 1.6 mi. southwest of Meridian

Meridian, Bosque County, Texas

Photo: Texas Historical Commission, 10/76

South Elevation

Photo # 2 *015*

DOE
OCT 25 1979

AUG 6 1979



Bridges-Johnson House

Rural Site, 1.6 mi. southwest of Meridian
Meridian, Bosque County, Texas

Photo: Texas Historical Commission, 10/76

West Elevation

Photo # 3 *45*

POE
OCT 25 1979

AUG 6 1979



Bridges-Johnson House

Rural Site, 1.6 mi. southwest of Meridian

Meridian, Bosque County, Texas

Photo: Texas Historical Commission, 10/76

North Elevation

Photo # 4^{00C}45

AUG 6 1979

OCT 25 1979



Bridges-Johnson House

Rural Site, 1.6 mi. southwest of Meridian

Meridian, Bosque County, Texas

Photo: Texas Historical Commission, 10/76

Interior Detail; enclosed dog run, wall
composition, door and window framing,
fireplace

Photo # 5 ¹⁵

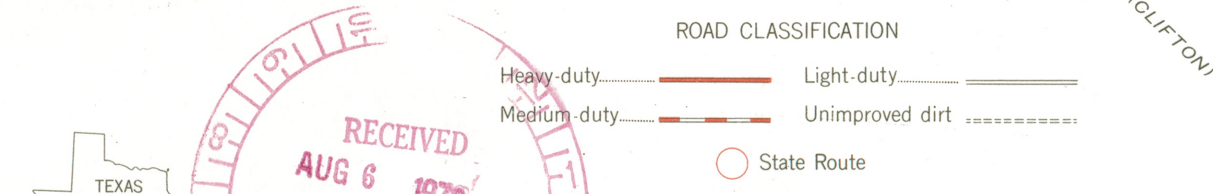
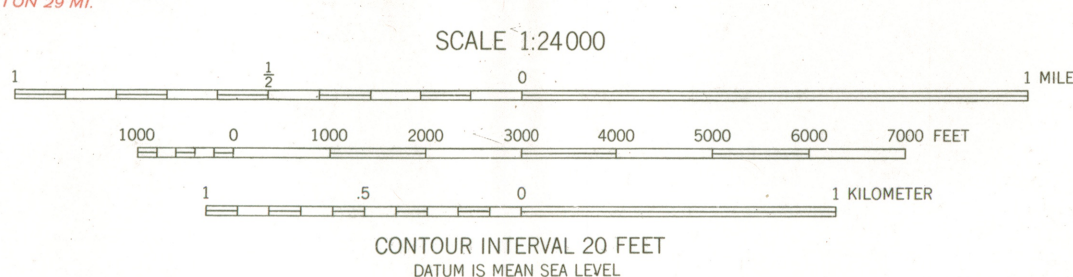
AUG 6 1979

^{DOC}
OCT 25 1979



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography from aerial photographs by ER-55 plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1955. Field check 1955
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
central zone
Unchecked elevations are shown in brown

TRUE NORTH
MAGNETIC NORTH
APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION, 1955



QUADRANGLE LOCATION
TEXAS
MERIDIAN, TEX.
NW/4 CLIFTON 15 QUADRANGLE
N3152.5—W9737.5/7.5
1955

BRIDGES - JOHNSON HOUSE
MERIDIAN, BOSQUE COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCES: 14T62T125/3551225

3152.5 343
OCT 25 1979

NAME OF PROPERTY Bridges - Johnson House STATE Texas

Date Information Requested/Date Put in "Hold" Drawer: 10/24/79

Date to Be Pulled from "Hold" Drawer: 11/24/79
(30 Days from Date Requested)

Information Requested From: Lissa Anderson

Information Requested/Reason Nomination Is Being Held:

VBD

Reviewer

DATE

10/25/79

TELEPHONE REPORT

TIME OF CALL

11:15

AM
PM

1. CALL TO: FROM (Name)

Lissa Anderson

2. ADDRESS (Tel. No. if needed)

TX

3. SUBJECT, PROJECT NO., ETC.

Bridges Johnson House

4. DETAILS OF DISCUSSION

house fence is { approx. 150 ft. from the South fence
centered on enclosure E-W axis

∴ VDD follows rectangle approx. 400' on a side, the south side of wh/ is roughly 150' from the house & wh/ is centered around the house on its East/West axis.

[Probably the best way to do this, but adequate]

NAME OF PERSON PLACING/RECEIVING CALL

TITLE

OFFICE

Beth

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

TEXAS

STATE

Date Entered OCT 25 1979

Name

Location

Bridges-Johnson House

Meridian vicinity
Bosque County

Hall, Robert, House

Seguin
Guadalupe County

Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd M. Bentsen

Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Marvin Leath
Honorable Abraham Kazan, Jr.

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

NR Byers/bjr 10/31/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.