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Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:**

**Johnson Settlement Area, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park  
Cultural Landscape Inventory**

**APPROVED BY  
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**Supervisor:**

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Michael Holleran

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Carrie Mardorf

**Johnson Settlement Area, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park  
Cultural Landscape Inventory**

**by**

**Margaret Xochitl Frisbie, B.A.**

**Report**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

**Master of Science in Historic Preservation**

**The University of Texas at Austin  
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## **Dedication**

For my lovely mother and father to whom I owe my love of landscape.

“The earth laughs in flowers” – Emerson



## **Acknowledgements**

I am infinitely grateful for the guidance, instruction, and advice of Carrie Mardorf at the National Park Service Intermountain Regional Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the production of this document. I'd like to thank the folks at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, in particular archivist Bao Nguyen, in her support of this endeavor. Another big thanks to the National Park Service for the opportunity to work with and learn from them. And much gratitude to the original summer 2010 Cultural Landscape Inventory gang for making curry and making me laugh and for the friendship, epic drives, unparalleled adventures at high altitudes, and remarkable resourcefulness in last minute UTM conversions.

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Thanks to Meghan Kleon and Maia McCoy in their patience and assistance in organizing the details of the cooperative agreement with the National Park Service that allowed this document to happen.

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## **Abstract**

### **Johnson Settlement Area, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Cultural Landscape Inventory**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

Supervisor: Michael Holleran

The Cultural Landscape Inventory is a comprehensive inventory of all historically significant landscapes within the National Park Service. This cultural landscape inventory documents the Johnson Settlement Area at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Johnson City, Texas. The Johnson Settlement Area served as the headquarters for former president Lyndon B. Johnson's paternal grandparents, Samuel Ealy Johnson and Eliza Bunton's, open-range cattle ranch from 1867 through 1872. After the collapse of the cattle ranching enterprise, the land was sold to James Polk Johnson and later converted into a small-scale farm by John Bruckner. From 1970 through 1972, Lyndon B. Johnson was involved with the planning, acquisition, and donation of a portion of the original settlement property to the National Park Service. In 1972, a major restoration and reconstruction project was completed as the property was converted into an historic interpretive landscape administered by the National Park Service. The Johnson Settlement Area is primarily an open pastoral landscape with reconstructed livestock

corrals and a cluster of restored and reconstructed building and structures that collectively convey the ranching and frontier heritage of former president Lyndon B. Johnson.

The cultural landscape inventory documents the physical development and historical significance of the Johnson Settlement Area. The inventory evaluates the landscape characteristics of the district and considers the integrity and overall condition of this historic vernacular landscape. Further, the inventory assesses eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The Johnson Settlement Area Cultural Landscape Inventory expands the 1990 National Register of Historic Places nomination in its period of significance, boundaries and acreage, and National Register Criteria.

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## **Inventory Unit Summary and Site Plan**

Cultural Landscape Inventory Name:	Johnson Settlement Area
Cultural Landscape Inventory Number:	850177
Parent Cultural Landscape Inventory Name:	Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
Parent Cultural Landscape Inventory Number:	850067
Park Name:	Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
Park Alpha Code:	LYJO
Park Org Code:	7350

### **LANDSCAPE/COMPONENT LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION**

#### ***Introduction***

The Johnson Settlement Area is one of two component landscapes that make up the Johnson City Unit of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. Established in 1969, the multiple and varied resources of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park document, interpret, and communicate the life and heritage of Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.

The resources of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park are located in and around Johnson City, Texas, the county seat of Blanco County. Within the wooded Hill Country of the south-central part of the state, Johnson City possesses a rural, vernacular architectural character. Currently home to just under 1,200 residents, Johnson City is located fifty miles west of Austin, the state capital, and 30 miles east of Fredericksburg, the county seat of Gillespie County. Both Austin and Fredericksburg are accessed via U.S. Highway 290, an east-west route that runs through the state of Texas and is also the main arterial through Johnson City.

Texas Hill Country is characterized by low, rolling hills covered with live oak, mesquite, and cedar trees. There are scattered rock outcroppings, croplands, and hayfields among various small towns in the area. The effects of grazing, fire suppression, the introduction of exotic species of plants and animals, cultivation, and construction are pervasive throughout the region.

### ***Location***

The Johnson Settlement Area is located on the western side of Johnson City, Texas, immediately south of Highway 290, also called Main Street within city limits. The Johnson Settlement Area makes up the southwestern section of the city with its maintenance facilities bordering rural land with groves of trees to the south. The Settlement Area is within city limits.

The boundaries of the Johnson Settlement Area Cultural Landscape Inventory include the part of Johnson City where the National Park Service Visitor Center and parking lots are located, which are federally owned, and also includes city-owned sidewalks that connect the Visitor Center to the historic section of the Johnson Settlement Area. The land in the Johnson Settlement Area historic section and “Back 40” Area is primarily federally owned. However, the portion of land between the federally owned “Back 40” Area and South Nugent Avenue, which is the eastern boundary of the CLI, is privately owned and is included within the Johnson Settlement Area CLI boundary.

### ***History and Significance***

The Johnson Settlement Area served as the headquarters for President Johnson’s paternal grandparents, Samuel Ealy Johnson and Eliza Bunton’s, open-range cattle ranch from 1867 through 1872. After the collapse of the cattle ranching enterprise, the land was sold to James Polk Johnson and later converted into a small-scale farm by John Bruckner, a German immigrant. From 1970 through 1972, Lyndon B. Johnson was involved with the planning, acquisition, and donation of a portion of the original settlement property to the National Park Service. In 1972, a major restoration and reconstruction project was



completed as the property was converted into an historic interpretive landscape administered by the National Park Service. The Johnson Settlement Area at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park opened to the public in 1974.

The period of significance for this component landscape extends from 1864 through 1973. The period of significance begins when Samuel Johnson's brother Tom obtained the 320-acre property and set up the family ranching business and concludes with the death of Lyndon B. Johnson in 1973. Thus, everything that was present while President Johnson was alive is considered to be contributing to the district. The period of significance covers a broad period in which the landscape has changed dramatically, first converted into a site for large-scale cattle grazing, then later into a small-scale farm, and finally converted into an historic interpretive site upon acquisition by the National Park Service. As a result of the period of significance ending in 1973, the management efforts of the National Park Service in planning an historic interpretive landscape are significant.

The Johnson Settlement Area is an historic vernacular landscape, significant under Criteria A, B, C, and D of the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of Agriculture, Architecture, Exploration/Settlement, Politics/Government, and Community Planning and Development. Criteria considerations E and G also apply to the property as it contains a number of reconstructed buildings that are less than 50 years in age. The Johnson Settlement Area has a rich layering of people, history, and land use with contributions to the development of the landscape by numerous relatives of President Johnson, later residents, and the National Park Service.

The Johnson Settlement Area retains integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The archeological sites, buildings and structures, circulation, cluster arrangement, constructed water features, cultural traditions, land use, natural systems and features, small-scale features, spatial organization, topography, vegetation, and views and vistas all qualify as contributing landscape characteristics at the Johnson Settlement Area. The overall condition of the Johnson Settlement Area landscape is good.

### ***Physical Description***

Currently, the Johnson Settlement Area is a 140-acre educational, interpretive, and administrative historic site characterized by an open pastoral landscape with scenic views. A cluster of buildings and structures in the central portion of the district characterizes the property and forms the main complex of buildings at the Settlement Area. These buildings and structures were restored and reconstructed by the National Park Service in the early 1970s and include several fences and corrals that divide the broader landscape into a smaller patchwork of pastures and field parcels. To the south, a second cluster of buildings known as the “Back 40” Area contains the maintenance facilities and park volunteer campground. Access to the area is provided via the Back Forty Road, which follows the west edge of the Settlement Area and links the two building clusters. A smaller building cluster is located within the eastern portion of the district; it consists of visitor facilities such as the Education Center and Visitor Center.

In addition to the aforementioned building clusters, among the most significant features of the Johnson Settlement Area include natural systems, small-scale features, circulation, and vegetation relating to the pastoral landscape. A number of pedestrian paths are within this area, including a ½-mile loop dirt path that leads from the Visitor Center and circles a 15-acre pasture currently undergoing native prairie restoration. Town Creek cuts through the district at a southwest-northeast angle, and roughly divides the Settlement Area into east and west halves. The area west of Town Creek contains a number of fences and corrals that surround the main building complex, and sections the landscape into pastures and restored prairies. The land to the east of Town Creek primarily consists of native grasses with scattered trees. Dense vegetation grows along the riparian corridor of Town Creek, which screens the Back 40 area from view. Together, these elements convey the ranching activities of President Johnson’s grandparents, farming activities of later residents, and tenure of the National Park Service.

Inventory Unit Size (Acres): 140 acres

Property Level: Component

***Site Plan Graphic Information***



Figure 1: Johnson Settlement Area boundary map (Source: Google Maps).

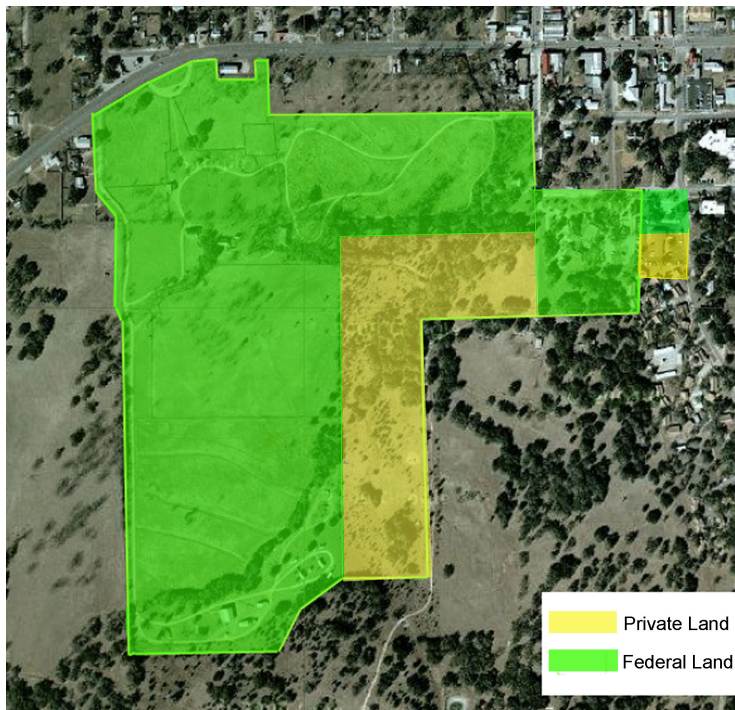


Figure 2: Johnson Settlement Area land ownership map (Source: Google Maps).

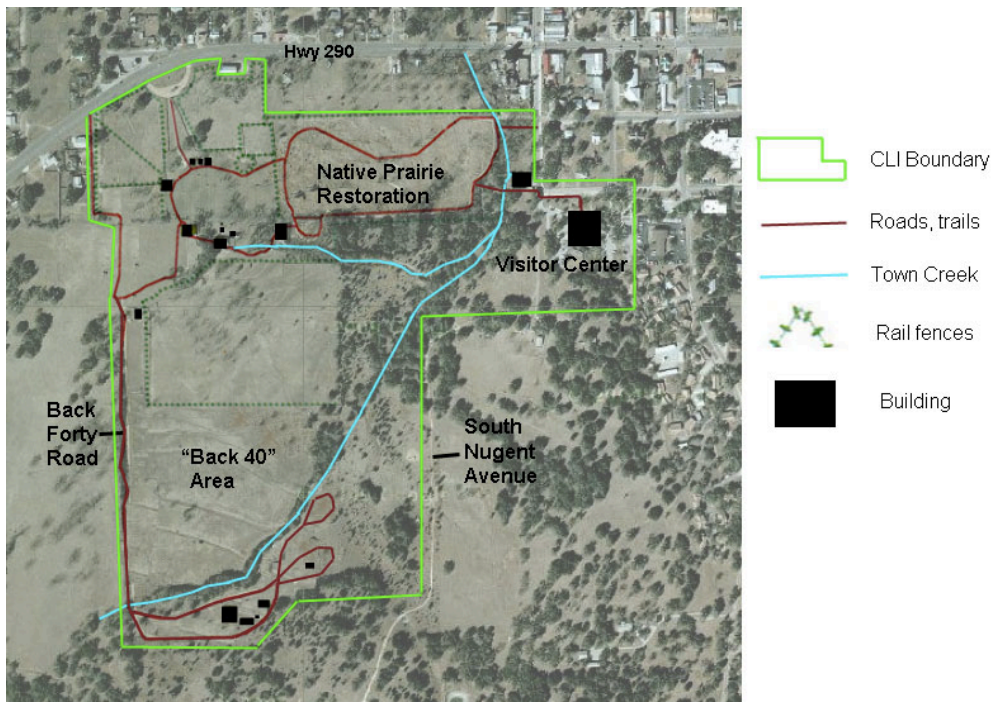


Figure 3: Overall Johnson Settlement Area site plan (Source: Google Maps).



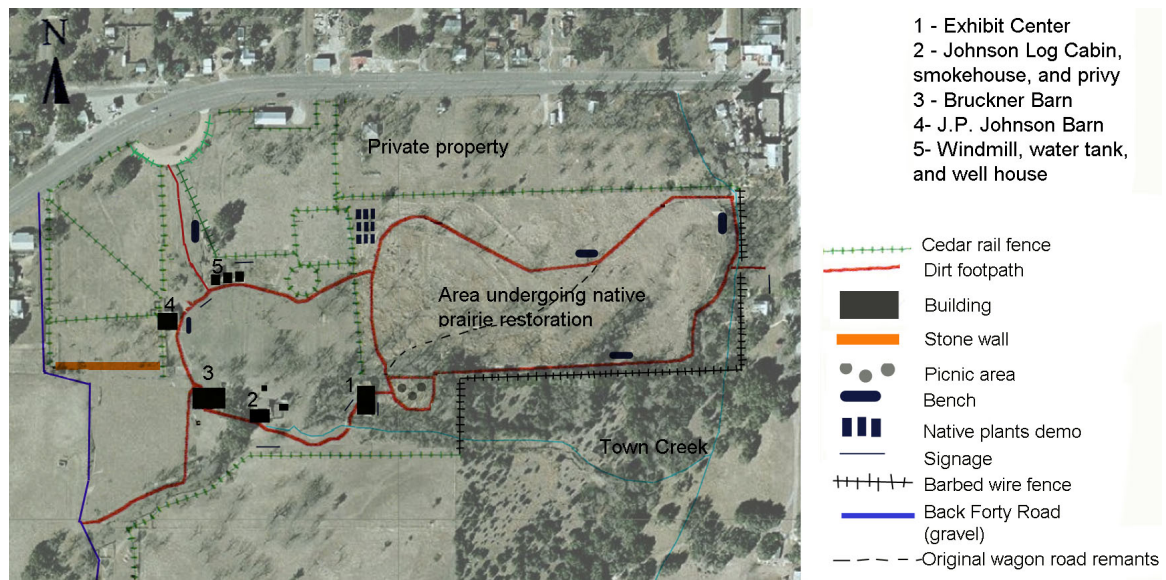


Figure 4: Northern section of Johnson Settlement Area site plan (Source: Google Maps).

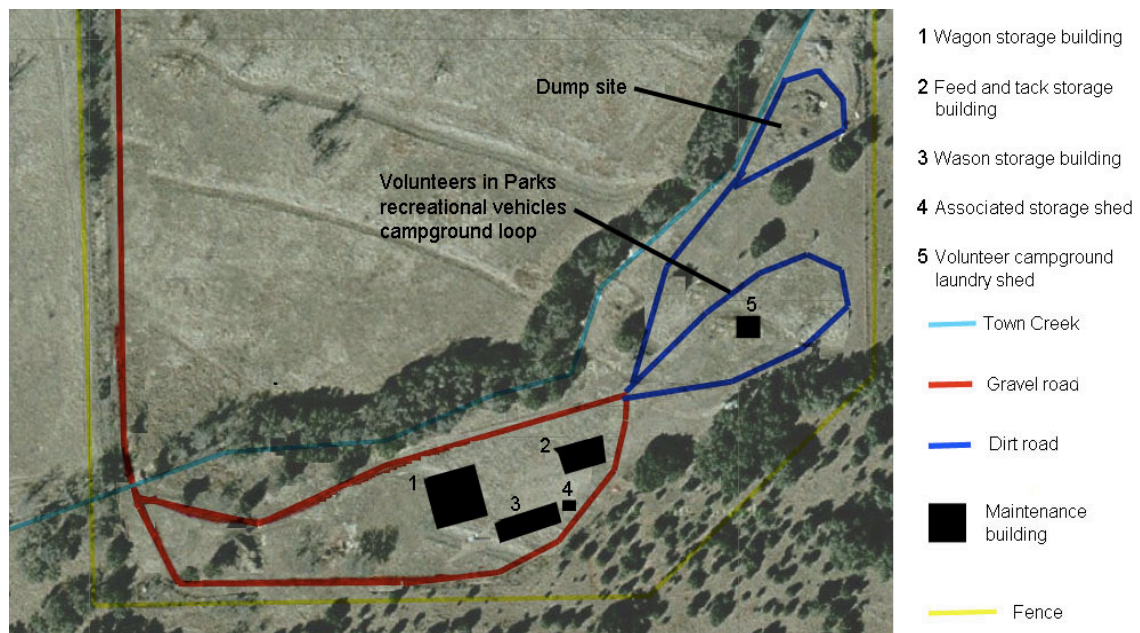


Figure 5: "Back 40" Area site plan (Source: Google Maps).

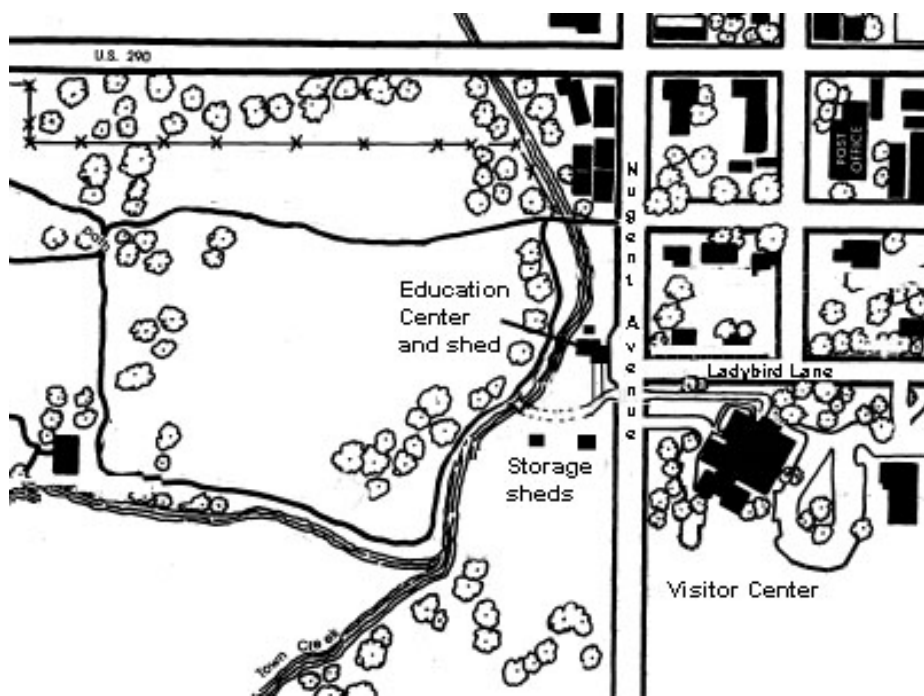


Figure 6: Visitor Center area site plan (Source: LBJ National Historical Park archives).

## **Concurrence Status**

### ***Completion Status Explanatory Narrative***

This cultural landscape inventory was completed through a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the University of Texas at Austin. Principal investigator was Michael Holleran, Associate Professor within the School of Architecture. Primary author was Meg Frisbie, Graduate Student in Historic Preservation. Historic research was undertaken in winter 2010-2011, and fieldwork was conducted in spring 2011.

### ***Geographic Information***

#### **Inventory Unit Boundary Description**

The Johnson Settlement Area is located on the western side of Johnson City, Texas, immediately south of Highway 290, also called Main Street within city limits. The Johnson Settlement Area makes up the southwestern section of the city with its maintenance facilities bordering rural land with groves of trees to the south. The Settlement Area is within city limits.

Both federally owned land and some privately owned land within the park authorized boundary are included in the boundaries for this Johnson Settlement Area CLI. The boundaries addressed in this CLI can be described as follows:

The western boundary follows the authorized park boundary that parallels Back Forty Road, which is the southern extension of Avenue N south of Main Street. Trees and a fence mark this western property boundary.

The northwest boundary of the Johnson Settlement Area follows the park boundary along the south edge of Main Street/Highway 290, which includes a dirt semi-circular parking area. To the northeast, the CLI boundary follows a cedar rail fence, which separates park property from privately owned property to the north. Although this privately owned property is included in the park authorized boundary, these parcels are

not included in this CLI. The cedar rail fence that marks the northeast boundary extends to the east side of Town Creek.

The eastern boundary includes the city block where the park Visitor Center is located in Johnson City and extends through undeveloped land to the south. From the northern boundary, the eastern boundary follows the west edge of South Nugent Avenue and turns east at Ladybird Lane to include the Visitor Center and associated parking area. From there, the boundary turns south and west to rejoin South Nugent Avenue, following the alignment of the road until it meets the south boundary. A portion of this eastern section, the land east of the federally-owned “Back 40” Area and west of South Nugent Avenue, is privately owned, but is within the park authorized boundary.

The southern boundary of the Johnson Settlement Area is demarcated by a fence that runs from east to west located to the south of the “Back 40” Area maintenance facilities and Volunteers in Parks campground loop road. There is a row of trees in the area and rural lands to the south.

***County and State***

State:	Texas
County:	Blanco County



### *Location Map Graphic Information*



Figure 7: Location of Johnson Settlement Area of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Johnson City, Texas, the county seat of Blanco County (Source: County.org).

### Boundary UTM

Boundary UTM Source	Boundary UTM Type	Boundary UTM Datum	Boundary UTM Zone	Boundary UTM Easting	Boundary UTM Northing	Boundary Datum Other
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	562891	3351471	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	489470	3367363	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	489483	3380883	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>

GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	511699	3381493	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	512662	3392170	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	503321	3391480	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	502186	3398295	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	480722	3397869	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	480843	3402671	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>
GPS – Differentially Corrected	Area	Other	14	559705	3397315	Google Earth, _ <u>WGS - 84</u>

### ***Regional Landscape Context***

#### Physiographic

The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is located on the Edwards Plateau of south central Texas. The Edwards Plateau is a distinct, cohesive geological and physiographic region that is also highly diverse biologically.

The two most important determinants of plant growth on the Edwards Plateau are climate and soil. The region has shallow, highly calcerous soils unsuited to the

accumulation of moisture reserves. The climate of the region varies from humid in the east, with short midsummer droughts, to semiarid year-round in the west. Sharp winter freezes and frequent periods of prolonged drought have had and continue to have strong influences on the success of crops and ornamental plants in the region.

The wide range of biotic diversity and many local variations make it difficult to generalize the vegetation of the Edwards Plateau. The most common description of the Edwards Plateau vegetation is that of live oak-juniper savannah on the uplands with juniper-dominated thickets in steep canyons.

The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park has three classes of vegetation. These include live oak-mesquite parks, live oak-juniper parks, and live oak-mesquite-juniper parks. These 'parks' are woody plants growing as clusters, or as scattered individuals within a continuous grassland. Overall, the region is a patchwork of grasslands, savannahs, and thickets of oak and juniper.

## Cultural

The original inhabitants of the Edwards Plateau were the Tonkawa Native Americans. Loosely organized, decimated by disease, and displaced by Comanches and Europeans, the Tonkawas as a cohesive people were unable to survive the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The Comanches who replaced them were relative latecomers to the southern plains and the Hill Country, but they left an important imprint on Texas history.

The Antelope band of the Comanches, which came to control the Llano Estacado region of the Edwards Plateau, was a fierce tribe that constantly raided the Texas frontier. The Tonkawas and Comanches, as well as the occasional bands of Wichitas and Apaches that traded across the Edwards Plateau, were nomadic hunters and gatherers. Even with the eventual acquisition of horses, firearms, and other implements of European technology, their impact on the environment was minimal. They may have used fire as a mechanism for hunting, and it is likely that accidental burning of the landscape resulted

from ill-tended campfires. However, these fires would have sustained the vegetation and overall ecosystem, as the native savannah relies on fire ecology.

The rugged terrain and Native Americans of the Edwards Plateau were formidable barriers to early explorers and settlers. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish settlers avoided most parts of this inhospitable territory. Several attempts at settlement were short-lived. Their best-known attempt, the mission and presidio at San Saba, near the present-day city of Menard, was abandoned in 1769 after being sacked by a combined force of Comanches and Wichitas in 1758.

Unlike their human counterparts, the free-ranging longhorn cattle of Spanish descent successfully populated the Texas Hill Country. The animals became even more abundant in the region than the native bison. Untended they established the foundation of the Texas cattle business and a pattern of livestock grazing that has had a profound and continuing impact on the region's vegetation.

Serious settlement of the Edwards Plateau began in the mid-1800s. Fredericksburg was founded in 1846 by German immigrants en route to a vast tract of land known as the Fisher-Miller Grant in west-central Texas. This land was too far from the coast to be settled immediately, and the towns of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, located 50 miles southeast and 30 miles west respectively of present day Johnson City, were established as way stations en route to the grant area.

Anglo settlement transformed the area from native, pre-settlement vegetation to the pastoral landscape of today. Blanco County was settled in the 1850s, primarily by Anglo American immigrants from the southern United States. Unlike the Germans, who enclosed their land with fences, the Americans continued to use the open range system of grazing. For example, Confederate soldiers returning from Civil War were able to establish their fortunes in the cattle business by rounding up large numbers of unbranded longhorns that had multiplied during the war years.

The first cattle drives in Blanco County took place in 1860s, but the days of the Texas cattle drives were short-lived. By the end of the 1880s, the open range was fenced

with barbed wire, improved breeds of cattle and new varieties of pasture grass were introduced, and the modern era of ranching had begun.

Today, about 98% of the Edwards Plateau is in range with limited production of small grains, grain sorghum, forage, and hay. Recreation is also a major land use. The immediate area of the Lyndon Johnson National Historical Park retains the rural charm, along with the aesthetics of the Hill Country landscape that makes it attractive to tourists. In recent years some of the region's large agricultural holdings have been divided up and sold as smaller hobby ranches. Some of the area's land has been converted into new residential developments.

## Political

Johnson City, Texas, the county seat of Blanco County, was the hometown of Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The small city is now the location of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, administered by the National Park Service since its establishment by Congress on December 2, 1969. Johnson City is now a small city with a population just under 1,200. During the early 1970s, the National Park Service worked with the extended Johnson family, to acquire properties and resources associated with the life of the former president. As of early 2011, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, which consists of both the Johnson City units and the Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch Unit, contain approximately 1,570 acres, 674 acres of which are federally owned.

## **Management Information**

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 12/02/1969

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

On December 02, 1969, Congress established Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Site "to preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of Lyndon B. Johnson." The Johnson Settlement Area is one of the properties that is associated with the life of the former President and must be preserved and maintained.

### ***Management Agreement***

Management Agreement: None

Management Agreement Expiration Date: N/A

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

No management agreement has been entered into by the National Park Service at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. There are no concessionaires, accommodations, or other similar facilities on the site.

### ***NPS Legal Interest***

Type of Legal Interest: Less than fee simple

Fee Simple Reservation for Life: No

Fee Simple Reservation Expiration Date: N/A

Other Organization/Agency: None

### NPS Legal Interest Explanatory Narrative:

The Johnson Settlement Area Cultural Landscape Inventory boundaries include both federal land and authorized private inholdings. The boundaries include part of Johnson City where the National Park Service Visitor Center and Headquarters is located, which is federally owned, and also includes city-owned sidewalks. The land in the Johnson Settlement Area historic section and “Back 40” Area is primarily federally owned but the CLI boundaries also include authorized privately owned land located between the “Back 40” Area and South Nugent Avenue.

### ***Public Access to Site***

Public Access:

Unrestricted

Public Access Explanatory Narrative: Public access to the site is unrestricted, including the “Back 40” Area where maintenance facilities are located. Although not expressly for visitors, it is reported that local residents use the area as a walking route.

## **National Register Information**

National Register Landscape Documentation: Entered – Inadequately Documented

### ***National Register Explanatory Narrative***

The Johnson Settlement Area is one of the several units included in the National Register of Historic Places nomination completed for the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in 1990. The National Register nomination does not emphasize the important landscape characteristics such as the vegetation, views and vistas, and circulation features that contribute to the integrity of the Johnson Settlement Area and as such, the landscape can be considered inadequately documented. For this cultural landscape inventory the boundaries/acreage, period of significance, and the National Register Criteria have all been expanded.

The current 1990 NR nomination records the size of the Johnson Settlement Area at 40 acres. This only includes the main visitor areas accessed from the pedestrian loop path around the cluster of historic buildings and structures and the open pasture undergoing restoration in the eastern part of the property. The boundaries addressed in this CLI expand the property to include the Visitor Center, the pastures south of the main visitor area, and the “Back 40” Area maintenance facilities. This is approximately 140 acres in total.

The 1990 NR nomination records the period of significance for the Johnson Settlement Area as 1869 through 1872. This CLI expands the period of significance to 1864 through 1973.

The current NR records the Johnson Settlement Area as significant under Criterion A and B. For this CLI, the Criteria have been expanded to A, B, C, and D. Criteria Considerations E and G also apply.



National Register Significance Level:	National
National Register Significance Contributing/Individual:	Contributing
National Register Classification:	District
National Historic Landmark Status:	No
National Historic Landmark Date:	N/A
National Historic Landmark Theme:	N/A
World Heritage Site Status:	No
World Heritage Site Date:	N/A
World Heritage Category:	N/A

#### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Congress established the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park on December 02, 1969, to preserve and interpret historically significant properties associated with the life and heritage of former President Lyndon B. Johnson. With a range of diverse resources from the 1860s through the 1970s, the park provides a unique perspective on the historic background and full-life span of the 36<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The various areas of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, including the Johnson Settlement Area, were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 as a nationally significant historic district.

Though remote from Lyndon B. Johnson's presidential years of 1963 through 1969, the Johnson Settlement Area, where Johnson's grandparents headquartered their 320-acre open-range cattle ranch from 1867 through 1872, reflects the social and cultural heritage of President Johnson. President Johnson took pride in his heritage and the land where he was born and nurtured. It was his grandparents that were among those who first settled Texas Hill Country, a land of extremes, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. The Johnson

Settlement Area is an historic scene from which this frontier president gained identity, strength, and values.

The Johnson Settlement Area can be characterized as an historic vernacular landscape and its period of significance extends from 1864 through 1973. Tom Johnson, President Johnson's great-uncle, acquired the 320-acre settlement property in 1864 from James Provost and his wife, the original tenants of the property. From 1867 through 1872 the property served as the headquarters for President Johnson's grandparents, Samuel Ealy Johnson and Eliza Bunton's, open-range cattle ranch. The property was sold to James Polk Johnson, Sam Johnson's nephew, in 1872 at which point the property underwent major changes and was no longer used for cattle grazing. A portion of the property was later purchased by James Bruckner in 1882 and used by Bruckner until 1931. The Bruckner family thereafter owned the section of the property with the Johnson log cabin (HB-7) until the National Park Service acquired it with funds donated by former President Johnson in 1972.

The Johnson Settlement Area is primarily a pastoral landscape with a cluster of restored and reconstructed buildings and structures that function as an interpretive educational site. In 1972 the National Park Service restored the few remaining buildings and reconstructed a handful of related buildings to bolster the historic scene. Former President Johnson contributed to this planning and reconstruction effort in order to recreate the character of the landscape of his ancestors. Because of this, these mid-20<sup>th</sup> century efforts are important to the history of the property. The period of significance concludes with the death of Lyndon B. Johnson in 1973.

The Johnson Settlement Area is significant under Criteria A, B, C, and D of the National Register of Historic Places. Criteria Considerations E and G also apply. The period of significance, 1864 through 1973, covers a broad period in which the landscape was converted into a site for a large-scale cattle ranching operation and then later used as a small-scale farm before being modified into an interpretive landscape by the National Park Service. Due to its richly varied history and affiliations, the Johnson Settlement Area component landscape is significant in the areas of Agriculture, Architecture,

Exploration/Settlement, Politics/Government, and in Community Planning and Development. While the Johnson Settlement Area has experienced many changes since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, it continues to convey its significance through its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

### ***Criterion A***

Associated with events and broad patterns of history

The resources of the Johnson Settlement Area, the buildings, structures, and landscape features, are significant under Criterion A for their association with the settlement of central Texas and agricultural activities within the region. The property is associated with President Johnson's ancestors' immigration to and livelihood in early Hill Country where they operated an open-range cattle business from the 1864 through 1872. The Johnson Settlement Area is thus significant in terms of both Settlement/Exploration of the Texas frontier and of Agriculture. As part of a larger migration to the south, the Bunton and Johnson families moved to the greater Hill Country area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and both families eventually joined the cattle drives of the time. The Hill Country is still associated with cattle grazing today.

Though often subject to the natural hardships of the Texas Hill Country landscape, the Johnson Settlement Area also demonstrates the adaptability to change agricultural enterprises from open range cattle grazing to farming and ranching in the last quarter century, as exemplified by later owners of the property, James Polk Johnson and John Bruckner.

### ***Criterion B***

Associated with the lives of significant persons

The Johnson Settlement Area is significant under Criterion B for its association with former President Lyndon B. Johnson. Established in 1969, the purpose of the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is "to preserve historically significant

properties associated with the life of Lyndon B. Johnson,” who was president of the United States from 1963 through 1969. As a significant national figure, the longhorns, Hill Country settlers, and somewhat primitive living conditions that were part of President Johnson’s frontier background were formative and had a profound influence on Lyndon Johnson’s upbringing. This component landscape is thus significant in association with Politics/Government.

President Johnson stated that, “I guess every person feels a part of the place where he was born. He wants to go back to the surroundings that he knew as a child and this is my country, the hill country of Texas. And through the years when time would permit, here is where I would always return, to the Pedernales River, the scenes of my childhood. There’s something different about this country from any other part of the Nation” (National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).

The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park was the vision of President and Mrs. Johnson. Lyndon Johnson first donated approximately 30 acres of the Johnson Settlement Area in 1970, and the National Park Service later purchased more acreage in 1972 with funds donated by the president. The Johnson Settlement Area property adds a unique dimension to the greater historical site that interprets the life, heritage, and political career of the 36<sup>th</sup> president. The original parcel of land donated by President Johnson in 1970 did not include the dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) that his grandparents lived in. Johnson was very interested in the log cabin and even suggested building a replica on the property that he had acquired immediately to the north of the original log cabin. He ultimately donated the funds for the property containing the log cabin, thus fulfilling his wishes to include the cabin in the park. In addition to his role in land acquisition and funding, documents and correspondence with the National Park Service from 1970 indicate that President Johnson was also involved in the planning of the Johnson Settlement Area. He heavily influenced the ultimate restoration and reconstruction of multiple buildings. As a result of Johnson’s influence in the planning process, the area is additionally significant under Community Planning and Development.

The properties at the Settlement Area are the physical documentation of President Johnson's ancestry. These properties complement the other resources at the park that record Johnson's entire life span. While distant from his presidential years, the Johnson Settlement Area preserves and interprets the important social and cultural heritage of the president. President Johnson was actively involved in the acquisition and planning of the Johnson Settlement Area.

### ***Criterion C***

Distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction

The Johnson Settlement Area is significant under Criterion C in that the buildings and structures in the district represent distinctive and distinguishable types. The buildings demonstrate settlers' influence on the open-range cattle industry of the period and mid-19th Century German immigrant settlers' influence on the architecture of the area. The inhabitants of the Johnson Settlement Area designed the property as a practical working landscape.

Historic buildings and structures at the Johnson Settlement Area exhibit a vernacular style, and include the dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) that Sam Ealy Johnson and Eliza Bunton lived in following their marriage, two stone barns (HB-10 and HB-11), and a stone well house (HB-12), in addition to other structures. Drury B. Alexander, a former architectural historian at the University of Texas identified the construction of the stone outbuildings at the Johnson Settlement Area as Germanic in origin, "exhibiting characteristic details of stonework including the placement of ventilation slits in the outer walls. These features were also brought to the Pennsylvania area by German immigrants in the eighteenth century and survive in many structures in the region of the Pennsylvania Dutch" (Bearss, 192). The Johnson Settlement Area is thus significant in terms of Architecture.

In the early 1970s the National Park Service restored the historic buildings that remained and reconstructed others that were on site during the historic period.

Specifically, the original Johnson dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) was restored by the National Park Service in 1972 to the 1867 to 1872 period. Overall, the building is a good example of a vernacular architectural style. A dogtrot building is generally composed of two separate rooms or log cabins connected under a continuous roof, with an open corridor between for ventilation. The stone barns at the Johnson Settlement, built after Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton's occupancy of the property, by James Polk Johnson and John Bruckner, are also significant representations of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Texas breezeway architecture.

### ***Criterion D***

Have yielded or may likely to yield information important in history or prehistory

The Johnson Settlement Area is significant under Criterion D of the National Register. As a site inhabited by Anglo settlers since James Provost and his wife purchased the 320-acre property in 1856 and considering the region was likely inhabited by Comanches beforehand, the Johnson Settlement Area and greater surrounding Johnson City region may yield information important in history. The site may yield material and cultural information regarding any or all of the inhabitants, particularly from the historic period in which the area was inhabited by the grandparents of Lyndon B. Johnson. The site may contain information regarding patterns of settlement, native and non-native plants, and other material and cultural resources.

James Provost and his wife likely cleared brush and timber for fuel and building materials. Since they were some distance from any major settlement, it is likely that they would have planted a garden for food. As with the Provosts, it seems fairly likely that the Johnsons would have kept a kitchen garden. Information regarding the daily life of Texas settlers may be yielded through further investigation of the site particularly around the buildings and throughout the open pastures.

### ***Criterion Consideration E***

#### Reconstructed buildings

The Johnson Settlement Area contains a number of reconstructed buildings and structures that were built in the early 1970s by the National Park Service to contribute to the historic landscape and complement the remaining historic buildings at that time. These reconstructions include the Johnson log cabin smokehouse (HB-8), the Johnson log cabin privy (HB-9), the water tank (HB-79), and the chicken house (BLDG-15), all of which are in the immediate area of the original restored buildings that were constructed during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. With the exception of the chicken house, these reconstructions are considered to be in their original locations.

In addition to the buildings, typical fences and corrals have also been reconstructed throughout the landscape to contribute to the historic character and scene. Constructed between 1970 and 1972, pens and corrals were built in the northern part of the district between the cluster of historic buildings and the “Back 40” Area. They currently house livestock as part of the interpretive scene. These reconstructed features were based on information about the architectural styles and materials of fences from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The reconstructed buildings and structures at the Johnson Settlement Area qualify as accurate reconstructions in a suitable environment.

### ***Criterion Consideration G***

#### Achieving significance within the past 50 years

The reconstructed properties at the Johnson Settlement Area are significant under Criterion G due to their exceptional importance in association with Lyndon B. Johnson. Additionally, the land was acquired and planned through the joint endeavors of Lyndon Johnson and the National Park Service within the past 50 years. The collective resources at the Johnson Settlement Area, both restored and reconstructed, tell the story of the ranching and frontier heritage of Lyndon Johnson’s grandparents.

### ***Summary of Significance***

The combined resources at the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park commemorate the heritage, life, and rise to power of the 36<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. Although they lived in radically different times, Lyndon B. Johnson's grandparents influenced the identity of the 36<sup>th</sup> President. The Johnson Settlement Area, with a period of significance from 1864 through 1973, is significant under Criteria A, B, C, and D of the National Register of Historic Places. Criterion Considerations E and G also apply to the property since a number of buildings have been reconstructed within the last 50 years.

### ***NRIS Information***

Park Alpha Code/ NRIS Name (Number):	69000202
Other National Register Name:	N/A
Primary Certification Date:	December 03, 1990

### ***National Register Significance Criteria***

National Register Significance Criteria:

A – XX  
B – XX  
C – XX  
D – XX

### ***National Register Significance Criteria Considerations***

National Register Criteria Consideration:

E - XX  
G - XX



### ***National Register Period of Significance***

Start Year: 1864  
Start Era AD/BC: AD  
End Year: 1973  
End Era AD/BC: AD

### ***Historic Context Theme***

1.     Historic Context Theme:           Peopling Places  
  
       Historic Context Subtheme:       Westward Expansion of Colonies and the  
  United States, 1763-1898  
  
       Historic Context Facet:           The Cattle Frontier  
  
       Other Historic Facet:            N/A
  
2.     Historic Context Theme:           Peopling Places  
  
       Historic Context Subtheme:       Westward Expansion of Colonies and the  
  United States, 1763-1898  
  
       Historic Context Facet:           The Farmers' Frontier  
  
       Other Historic Facet:            N/A
  
3.     Historic Context Theme:           Creating Social Institutions and Movements  
  
       Historic Context Subtheme:       Ways of Life  
  
       Historic Context Facet:           Ranching Communities  
  
       Other Historic Facet:            N/A
  
4.     Historic Context Theme:           Expressing Cultural Values  
  
       Historic Context Subtheme:       Architecture  
  
       Historic Context Facet:           Vernacular

- |    |                            |   |
|----|----------------------------|---|
|    | Other Historic Facet:      | N/A   |
| 5. | Historic Context Theme:    | Developing the American Economy                         |
|    | Historic Context Subtheme: | The Cattle Frontier                                     |
|    | Historic Context Facet:    | Great Trail Drives, 1866-1885                           |
|    | Other Historic Facet:      | N/A   |
| 6. | Historic Context Theme:    | Developing the American Economy                         |
|    | Historic Context Subtheme: | Agriculture   |
|    | Historic Context Facet:    | Animal Husbandry (Cattle, Horses, Sheep, Hogs, Poultry) |
|    | Other Historic Facet       | N/A   |

***National Register Areas of Significance***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Area of Significance Category:               | Agriculture<br>Architecture<br>Exploration/Settlement<br>Politics/Government<br>Community Planning and Development |
| Area of Sig. Category Explanatory Narrative: | N/A  |
| Area of Significance Subcategory:            | N/A  |

## **Chronology and Physical History**

### ***Primary Historic Function***

Major Category:	Agriculture/Subsistence
Primary Historic Function - Category:	Livestock
Primary Historic Function:	N/A

### ***Primary Current Use***

Major Category:	Education
Primary Current Use - Category:	Interpretive Landscape
Primary Current Use:	N/A

### ***Cultural Landscape Types***

Cultural Landscape Type:	Historic Vernacular Landscape
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### ***Other Current and Historic Uses/Functions***

1. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Domestic (Residential)
Other Historic Function – Category:	Single Family Dwelling
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	Cabin
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A
2. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Agriculture/Subsistence
Other Historic Function – Category:	Agricultural Outbuildings
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	Barn
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A
3. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Agriculture/Subsistence

Other Historic Function – Category:	Livestock
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	N/A
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A
4. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Agriculture/Subsistence
Other Historic Function – Category:	Agricultural Field
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	N/A
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A
5. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Landscape
Other Historic Function – Category:	Functional Landscape
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	Pedestrian Circulation
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A
6. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Landscape
Other Historic Function – Category:	Natural Area
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	Prairie
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A
7. Other Historic Function – Major Category:	Landscape
Other Historic Function – Category:	Pedestrian Related
Other Historic Function or Current Use:	Interpretive Trail
Other Historic Function of Current Use Type:	N/A

### Current and Historic Names

Current and Historic Name	Type of Current and Historic Name	Display Sequence
Johnson Settlement Area	Current	1
Johnson City District	Current	2
Johnson Settlement Site	Current	3
Sam Ealy Johnson Farm	Historic	4
Johnson Ranch	Current and Historic	5
Old Fort Land	Historic	6

### Chronology

Start Year of Major Event	Start Era AD/ BC of Major Event	End Year of Major Event	End Era AD/ BC of Major Event	Major Event	Major Event Description
1836	AD	1836	AD	Established	Texas declares independence from New Spain (Source: The Handbook of Texas Online).
1838	AD	1838	AD	Established	Homesteading legislation is enacted in the Republic of Texas (Source: The Handbook of Texas Online).
1838	AD	1838	AD	Established	November 12. Samuel Ealy Johnson is the tenth child born to Jesse Johnson and Lucy Webb Barnett in Alabama (Source: Johnson, 69).
1846	AD	1846	AD	Settled	Jesse Johnson brings his family to Texas, settling in Lockhart (Source: Johnson, 69).

1848	AD	1848	AD	Established	Texas becomes a state within the U.S. and immigration to East Texas increases (Source: The Handbook of Texas Online).
1849	AD	1849	AD	Established	June 24. Eliza Bunton is born in Russellville, Kentucky, to Robert Holmes and Priscilla Jane McIntosh Bunton (Source: Johnson, 72).
1853	AD	1853	AD	Built	The first fences in the region are built of cedar rails or rocks (Source: Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).
1856	AD	1856	AD	Home-steaded	James Provost purchases 320 acres of the Joseph Duel Survey (Source: Bearss, 185).
1856	AD	1856	AD	Built	Provost and his wife erect a log cabin (HB-7) and build a bush corral and several modest outbuildings on what is now known as the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Bearss, 185-186).
1858	AD	1858	AD	Settled	The Bunton family moves from Kentucky to Texas, near Bastrop, then to Lockhart (Source: Caro, 06-07).
1859	AD	1859	AD	Ranched/ Grazed	Sam Johnson and his brother Tom buy cattle and pasture them in Fredericksburg, Texas, before driving them on to Kansas. (Source: Johnson, 70).
1859	AD	1871	AD	Established	The Johnson brothers engage in the cattle driving business together, except when enlisted in the Civil War (Source: Dallek).
1861	AD	1861	AD	Established	September 18. Sam Johnson enlists at Lockhart, Texas, in Company B, De Bray's Regiment, C.S.A, and serves through the Civil War (Source: Dallek, 15).

1864	AD	1864	AD	Land transfer	Tom Johnson acquires the 320-acre Settlement Area from the Provosts and sets up a cattle ranch (Source: Dallek, 15). The period of significance begins.
1864	AD	1869	AD	Built	Fences are constructed in the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).
1865	AD	1865	AD	Ranched/ Grazed	Sam Johnson returns to Johnson City joining his brother Tom at the Settlement Area, the headquarters for their open-range cattle business, and resumes cattle buying (Source: Dallek, 15).
1865	AD	1869	AD	Built	Mid to late 1860s. The Johnsons build an east wing on the Provost cabin (HB-7), hereafter referred to as the Johnson log cabin, a dogtrot building (Source: Bearrs, 190).
1867	AD	1867	AD	Established	December 11. Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton are married in Lockhart (Source: Johnson, 70).
1867	AD	1867	AD	Inhabited	Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton live in the Johnson log cabin (HB-7) (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1869	AD	1869	AD	Altered	Eliza Bunton survives a Comanche attack at the Settlement Area. Horses and cattle are taken (Source: Dallek, 18).
1869	AD	1869	AD	Land transfer	The Johnsons obtain a fee simple title to the Settlement Area property (Source: Bearss, 188).
1870	AD	1870	AD	Established	Sam and Tom Johnson are mentioned in "Trail Drivers of Texas" as being the largest individual trail drivers operating in 1870 in Blanco, Gillespie, Llano, Burnet, Hays, Comal, and

					Kendall Counties. In 1870 they drive 7,000 longhorns north on the Chisholm Trail to Abilene, Kansas (Source: Caro, 20).
1871	AD	1872	AD	Altered	The Johnson cattle operation collapses (Source: Caro, 28-30).
1872	AD	1872	AD	Land transfer	Sam Johnson's nephew, James Polk Johnson, purchases the land and moves to the Settlement Area (Source: Bearss, 187).
1872	AD	1882	AD	Built	James Polk Johnson builds a water tank on site (Source: Johnson Settlement Area LCS).
1872	AD	1889	AD	Settled	Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton move to Caldwell County and later to Hays County, where they raise their nine children (Source: Caro, 31).
1879	AD	1881	AD	Built	James Polk Johnson builds a barn (HB-11) at the Settlement Area (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1880	AD	1889	AD	Built	1880s. A 14-foot yellow pine Eclipse windmill (HB-78) tower with a wooden wind wheel is constructed on site (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1882	AD	1882	AD	Land transfer	James Polk Johnson sells the southern portion of the property to John Bruckner who does not move to the land until 1893. This portion of the property contains the Johnson log cabin (HB-7). James Polk Johnson continues to reside in the northern portion (Source: Bearss, 187).
1884	AD	1884	AD	Built	John Bruckner builds a large stone barn (HB-10) with shed additions of board-and-batten construction (Source: National



					Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1893	AD	1893	AD	Altered	John Bruckner moves to the ranch and makes additions to the log cabin (HB-7): a shed room, kitchen, dining room, and framed-ell (Source: Bearss, 191).
1896	AD	1896	AD	Established	Judge N.T. Stubbs, son-in-law of James Polk Johnson, administers the northern section of the Johnson Settlement Area upon the death of James Polk Johnson's wife (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1896	AD	1899	AD	Built	Located to the east of the James Polk Johnson barn, Judge N.T. Stubbs constructs a well house (HB-12) for hot weather storage of perishable foods (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1905	AD	1905	AD	Built	The George T. Bryan House (Education Center, HB-99) is built east of Town Creek (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1908	AD	1908	AD	Established	August 27. Lyndon B. Johnson is born near Stonewall, Texas (Source: The Handbook of Texas Online).
1911	AD	1911	AD	Established	A photograph of the Bruckners in front of the log cabin (HB-7) shows additions to the house: the additional rooms and framed-ell. The roof has corrugated sheet metal. The Johnson well (HB-007.A) and numerous trees to the south of the building are also visible.
1915	AD	1915	AD	Established	February 25. Sam Ealy Johnson dies of pneumonia in Stonewall, Texas (Source: Johnson, 71).

1917	AD	1917	AD	Established	January 30. Eliza Bunton dies (Source: Johnson, 73).
1918	AD	1918	AD	Altered	A two-story framed house near the James Polk Johnson barn burns down (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1920	AD	1929	AD	Altered	The George T. Bryan house (Education Center, HB-99) undergoes cosmetic changes to the interiors, siding, and porch (Source: Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Johnson Settlement Area map).
1920	AD	1939	AD	Planted	1920s and 1930s. The pecan groves are planted at the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Carls and Gardner).
1931	AD	1931	AD	Established	Bruckner dies. At this time the ranch has 125 acres under cultivation. The land has been converted from pastures to cultivated fields (Source: Bearss, 188).
1931	AD	1970	AD	Land Transfer	Following the death of Bruckner in September, the Bruckner children divide the estate and sell the property to Fred Bruckner for \$10 (Source: Bearss, 188).
1963	AD	1969	AD	Established	Lyndon B. Johnson becomes president of the United States following the assassination of John F. Kennedy (Source: The Handbook of Texas Online).
1968	AD	1970	AD	Built	The LBJ Memorial Hospital (HB-100) is constructed in Johnson City by the Pedernales Hospital Authority (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1969	AD	1969	AD	Established	December 2. Congress establishes Lyndon B. Johnson National

					Historical Site, which at the time does not include the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1970	AD	1970	AD	Land Transfer	Lyndon B. Johnson acquires just under 30 acres of the original Johnson Settlement Area. The acreage includes the area west of Town Creek to present day Back Forty Road, and from Highway 290 to just north of the Bruckner barn (HB-11) and Johnson log cabin (HB-7), but not including the Bruckner barn or Johnson log cabin (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1970	AD	1970	AD	Planned	A development plan for the Johnson Settlement Area is proposed (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1970	AD	1972	AD	Built	The fences, pens, and corrals at the Settlement Area are built for interpretive purposes by Bobby Flickinger and crew (Source: Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).
1970	AD	1972	AD	Built	The rock wall near the James Polk Johnson barn is constructed from 6000 tons of rock brought to the site from an existing rock wall in Blanco County (Source: Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Land Transfer	The parcel of land containing the Johnson log cabin (HB-7) and Bruckner barn (HB-11) is acquired by the NPS with funds provided by Lyndon B. Johnson (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives correspondence between the Superintendent and President Johnson).

1972	AD	1972	AD	Restored	The National Park Service restores the Johnson dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) to the 1867-1872 period (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Restored	The National Park Service restores the yellow pine windmill (HB-78) with a wooden tower and wooden wind wheel (Source: Johnson Settlement Area LCS).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Reconstructed	The National Park Service reconstructs a smokehouse (HB-8) associated with the log cabin of squared oak log construction with lime mortar chinking (Source: National Register of Historical Places nomination, 1990).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Reconstructed	The National Park Service reconstructs a privy (HB-9) associated with the log cabin, situated on the original location. It is of squared-oak log construction, chinked with lime mortar and tree-nailed corners and a puncheon floor (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Restored	The National Park Service restores the Bruckner barn (HB-10) (Source: Johnson Settlement Area LCS).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Built	The National Park Service constructs a Blacksmith Shop (HB-13) at the Settlement Area to contribute to the historic scene. There was never a Blacksmith Shop on site (Source: Johnson Settlement Area LCS).
1972	AD	1972	AD	Built	By this time the National Park Service has constructed a dirt footpath nature trail around the cluster of historic buildings and

					structures (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives photographs).
1972	AD	1973	AD	Restored	Early 1970s. The National Park Service restores the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), likely in 1972 (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1972	AD	1973	AD	Re-constructed	Early 1970s. The National Park Service reconstructs a cypress water tank (HB-79) (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1972	AD	1973	AD	Built	Early 1970s. The National Park Service constructs a chicken house (HB - 15) of board and batten construction with a cedar shingled roof. It is not original and historically there was no chicken house (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1973	AD	1973	AD	Built	The Johnson Settlement Area Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) is constructed southeast of the cluster of restored and reconstructed buildings and structures (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1973	AD	1973	AD	Established	January 22. Lyndon B. Johnson dies (Source: The Handbook of Texas Online). End of the period of significance.
1974	AD	1974	AD	Established	By 1974, the park boundaries extend to the current "Back 40" Area. The "Back 40" Area at this time is leased (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

1974	AD	1974	AD	Built	Maintenance facilities (BLDG – 49, BLDG – 47, and BLDG - 56) are constructed in the “Back 40” Area of the property that is being leased by the NPS (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1974	AD	1974	AD	Altered	The Johnson Settlement Area is opened to the public (Source: undated Johnson Settlement Area tour brochure).
1974	AD	1974	AD	Planted	Pastures are plowed and reseeded with native species (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1974	AD	1974	AD	Built	By this time the NPS has constructed a dirt wagon road for wagon tours through the area (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archive photographs).
1977	AD	1977	AD	Built	The Sprayer Storage Building (BLDG – 56) at the Johnson Settlement Area is constructed east of Back Forty Road, south of the cluster of historic buildings and structures (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1980	AD	1980	AD	Established	The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Site becomes the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park, authorizing further acquisition of land (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1981	AD	1981	AD	Removed	72 pecan trees are removed from the district (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives correspondence).
1981	AD	1981	AD	Established	A soil and water conservation plan is completed in the spring of 1981 that includes soil conditions (poor-fair), seeding

					recommendations, and grazing recommendations (Source: Soil and Water Conservation Plan).
1982	AD	1982	AD	Established	Measured drawings for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) are completed of the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), Bruckner barn (HB-10), and James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11) (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1986	AD	1986	AD	Established	An historic vegetation study is completed for the entire park (Source: Carls and Gardner).
1988	AD	1988	AD	Preserved	A Cultural Resource Management Plan recommends the cultivation of more native grasses, berries and weeds, the relocation of the chuck wagon, and continued preservation maintenance (Source: 1988 Cultural Resource Management Plan).
1989	AD	1989	AD	Land transfer	The park acquires some parcels of land from Johnson City in the vicinity of the LBJ Memorial Hospital (the future NPS Visitor Center) (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives correspondence).
1990	AD	1990	AD	Purchased/ Sold	LBJ Memorial Hospital (HB-100) is acquired by the NPS to be converted into the NPS Visitor Center/Headquarters (Source: National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1990).
1990	AD	1990	AD	Established	A National Register Nomination for the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is completed.
1992	AD	1992	AD	Built	A new handicap accessible trail is built between the new Visitor Center (HB-100) and Settlement Area with accompanying new

					signage and waysides and a shuttle bus service (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1994	AD	1994	AD	Altered	The Visitor Center (HB-100) is complete with new parking lots, storm water system, irrigation systems, signs, walks, curbing, and other street improvements and utility modifications. Some trees were also removed from the area (Source: Visitor Center Completion Report).
1995	AD	1995	AD	Planned	A new trail and planting plan for the Settlement Area are proposed (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1997	AD	1997	AD	Altered	A new parking lot is constructed at the Visitor Center (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1998	AD	1998	AD	Land Transfer	The NPS acquires buffer properties in Johnson City south of Highway 290 to the east of the Settlement Area in for reuse (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
1999	AD	1999	AD	Established	A General Management Plan is completed. The document describes the necessity of ongoing pasture management in order to convey the historic scene at the Johnson Settlement Area and suggests prescribed burns in order to remove the non-native plants. The document also describes ongoing efforts to work with Johnson City in developing the city's master plan (Source: 1999 General Management Plan).
2001	AD	2001	AD	Established	The "Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management" document states that the fences on



					the site historically would have been stone or rail. The document asserts that the fences were constructed from 1970 through 1972 and were not built from plans but from what was known about other fences built by early settlers in the area. The document also notes that there are no compliance documents from past fence maintenance (Source: Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).
2002	AD	2002	AD	Removed	Approximately ten more pecan trees are removed from the district (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives correspondence).
2004	AD	2004	AD	Altered	Parts of the boundary fence are replaced (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives correspondence).
2005	AD	2005	AD	Established	A target plant composition for the prairie is established (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
2008	AD	2008	AD	Removed	Blacksmith Shop (HB-13) is removed from the property (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
2008	AD	2008	AD	Planned	Mid-grass prairie restoration is proposed at the property (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
2008	AD	2008	AD	Planned	A proposal is put forth to restore the historic entrance at the property (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).
2010	AD	2010	AD	Altered	Prescribed burn is carried out to restore 3 acres of prairie at the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

2010	AD	2011	AD	Established	A Cultural Landscape Inventory is completed for the Settlement Area.
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## PHYSICAL HISTORY

Physical History Time Period: 1836 - Present

### *Physical History Narrative*

Historical Context: 1836 - 1864

The grandparents of former United States president Lyndon B. Johnson were part of a significant southbound migration of people to central Texas in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. The land where the Johnsons and Buntons settled would in time influence the identity and values of the 36<sup>th</sup> President.

Upon declaring independence from New Spain in 1836, the Republic of Texas, with its wide-open tracts of land, enacted homesteading legislation in 1838 to invite settlers into the region (The Handbook of Texas Online). Fueled by dreams of cattle and cotton kingdoms, families slowly began moving to the area in hopes of making a fortune.

During the 1840s there were but a few isolated cabins in the Hill Country of central Texas, scattered sparsely across the landscape west of Austin, the recently established capital of the republic. When Texas gained statehood and joined the United States in 1846, tens of thousands of families headed westward across the Mississippi River and over the Sabine River into Texas, “GTT” – Gone To Texas – scrawled on their wagons. In 1837 the population of Texas was 40,000, and by 1847 the population soared to 140,000 (Caro, 05). Most immigrants settled in the Piney Woods, near the eastern border of the state, along the Gulf and coastal plains. Very few ventured across the Blackland Prairie to the Edwards Plateau of central Texas into Hill Country, a region that was dominated by the Penateka Comanches.

Considered the edge of the frontier, by 1853 there were but thirty-six families along the Blanco River, and thirty-four along the Pedernales in central Texas. By 1858,

there were approximately one thousand individuals living along both rivers. Texas historian T.R. Fehrenbach writes that “for two decades the frontier wavered, now forward, now back, locked in bitter battle” with the Comanches. 1858 and 1859 were considered two of the “bloodiest years in Texas history,” with hundreds dead on the isolated frontier (Caro, 05).

The home of a typical Hill Country family was a dogtrot cabin, a building usually composed of two separate rooms or log cabins connected under a continuous roof, with an open corridor between for ventilation. One cabin was generally used for cooking and dining, while the other cabin was used for a private living space, such as a bedroom. Fehrenbach writes that, “This life was hardy, dirty, terribly monotonous, lonely, and damagingly narrow... Few of the Americans who later eulogized it would care to relive it” (Caro, 18). Between the threat of raids and harsh living conditions, many risked death on the Texas frontier in hopes of wealth through cattle ranching or farming.

Settlers arrived in Hill Country to encounter fields of tall grasses with almost no brush, only occasional oaks amidst a sea of green grass considered desirable for cattle grazing. However, what appeared to the settlers as an ideal never-ending pastureland was in fact fragile grass that had grown tall over many centuries on a narrow, thin layer of soil atop limestone (Caro, 08-10; Dallek 14). The climatic conditions and long term consequences associated with the grass growing out of a thin layer of topsoil, easily decimated and vulnerable to wind, rain, and drought, was not understood by the settlers at the time. It was an insidious landscape that would eventually destroy the dreams of many settlers.

Robert Holmes Bunton, former President Lyndon B. Johnson’s maternal great-grandfather, followed his brother John to Texas in 1858 at the age forty, first settling with his family near Bastrop then later moving to Lockhart. Bunton fought in the Civil War and then returned to Lockhart where he became a successful cattle driver, sending herds of cattle to Abilene, Kansas, and as a result acquired a large amount of land in central Texas, though not in the immediate region of the Johnson Settlement Area, where President Johnson’s grandparents later homesteaded. After a few unprofitable years,

Bunton, an intelligent and practical man, stopped raising cattle and instead rented out the family's pastures as grazing lands to other cattle drivers for herds from south Texas that were passing through the area, thus capitalizing on a trade in which few were still making money (Dallek, 17). As such the Buntons survived the economic downturn that affected many in central Texas in the 1870s and made enough money to retire comfortably and later offer financial assistance to their daughter Eliza Bunton, President Johnson's grandmother.

Eliza Bunton was the fourth child born to Robert Holmes Bunton and Priscilla Jane McIntosh Bunton in Russellville, Kentucky, on June 24, 1849 (Johnson, 72). Eliza Bunton moved with her family to Lockhart and lived there until her marriage to Samuel Ealy Johnson, President Johnson's grandfather, in 1867.

Samuel Ealy Johnson was born on November 12, 1838, in Alabama, as the tenth child of Jesse Johnson and Lucy Webb Barnett (Johnson, 69). In 1846, Jesse Johnson moved his family to Lockhart, Texas, approximately 60 miles southeast of what is today Johnson City. Lockhart records show that in 1850 Jesse Johnson owned 332 acres in the region, 250 head of cattle and 21 horses (Caro, 15). However, when Jesse Johnson passed away in 1856, there was not enough money to pay off his debts. His wife survived him by only one year.

Orphaned at age 18, Sam Johnson and his brother Tom, then twenty, ventured into the cattle business shortly after their father's death, buying and pasturing cattle in the nearby city of Fredericksburg by 1859 and establishing their headquarters in the general area around what was later named Johnson City, though not yet at the Johnson Settlement Area (Caro, 16). Their work in the cattle industry was interrupted when on September 18, 1861, Sam Johnson, then twenty-two, enlisted at Lockhart, Texas, in Company B, De Bray's Regiment, C.S.A., and served through the Civil War (Dallek, 15).

Period of Significance: 1864-1973

After serving briefly in the Texas State Troops, in 1864 Tom Johnson acquired a 320-acre ranch on the Pedernales River, 140 acres of which is now preserved and

administered as the Johnson Settlement Area (Dallek, 15). The ranch originally covered much of what is present day Johnson City. Although he did not yet hold title to the land, Tom established the Johnson brothers cattle operations on the property. The previous and first residents of the Settlement Area were James Provost and his wife Martha who purchased the 320 acres of the Joseph Duel Survey. In 1856, Provost and his wife built a log cabin (HB-7) with a stone fireplace, a brush corral, and several outbuildings near a spring (later named Town Creek). Only the log cabin remains of this original settlement. When the Provosts resided at the property, the cabin was a one-room cabin of hand-hewn, squared oak logs with lime mortar chinking. It is likely that Provost and his wife would have cleared any brush and cut any timber in the immediate area for fuel and building materials. Conditions were likely fairly primitive with few structural additions to the original log cabin other than a minimal amount of corral fencing in the immediate vicinity (Bearss, 186). Since they were some distance from any major settlement, it is also likely that they would have planted a garden for food on the site.

At the end of the war in 1865, Sam Johnson took up residence with his brother in the log cabin (HB-7) on the 320-acre settlement, which served as headquarters for the cattle driving operation for the Johnson brothers for the next several years (Dallek, 15). Sometime during the latter half of the 1860s, the Johnson brothers added an east wing with a large chimney to the cabin, creating a dogtrot log cabin (Bearss, 188-190).

Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton married in Lockhart on December 11, 1867 (Johnson, 70). The couple moved into the dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) at the Settlement Area. Eliza Bunton was eighteen years old when she married Sam Johnson and moved to the Pedernales region, and she immediately began accompanying her husband on many of the cattle drives north. One historian notes that she may have been the only Hill Country wife that accompanied her husband on cattle drives (Caro, 20). The Johnsons obtained a fee simple title to the Settlement Area property in 1869.

In 1869, Eliza was home alone with her young daughter, Mary, in the log cabin (HB-7) when she noticed a number of Comanches riding toward her and she hid in the root cellar of the cabin with her baby without being noticed. Using a stick pushed through

a hole in the root cellar door, she maneuvered a rug over her hiding place. Although the Comanches ransacked the cabin and stole horses and cattle, Eliza and the child survived (Caro, 21). By the late 1860s there were fewer and fewer Comanche raids in Hill Country. Anglo settlers had decimated the buffalo population, which provided food, clothes, and shelter to Native Americans, forcing them to leave the region.

During the Civil War, the region's cattle had run free and had greatly multiplied, both in population and in value. According to local law, unbranded and unattended cattle were free for the taking, so the Johnson brothers' herds increased greatly following the war. Sam and Tom were among the first trail drivers of Hill Country. A growing population in the northern cities of the United States had created an increased demand for beef and when the railroad reached Sedalia, Missouri, in 1866, and shortly thereafter Abilene, Kansas, in 1867, there was a reliable means of getting livestock to the east and north. As the result, the market for longhorn steers flourished. Two-dollar-a-head cattle in Texas sold for \$10 in Sedalia the year after the war, and in 1867 four-dollar Texas steers sold for up to \$50 in Abilene (Caro, 19). The combination of growing cities in the north and access to the railroad made cattle driving extremely viable and profitable. It appeared that all that was needed to succeed was access to water and grass on which to graze cattle herds.

Although it was possible to graze cattle on land in the Hill Country for free, the Johnson brothers began purchasing private land on which to graze their herds. Over the next few years they grazed their herds in the same pastures every season. To help them manage the growing business, they brought in three nephews: John, Jesse, and James Johnson. Other cattle owners brought their herds to the Johnson Settlement for the brothers to drive up the Chisholm Trail to northern railheads (Caro, 25). Over 6 million cattle traveled the Chisholm Trail in one of the largest animal migrations ever documented. Extensive corrals were thus built to hold the many cattle from approximately 1864 through 1869. John Bruckner, who later owned the Johnson Settlement Area property, claimed that the corrals extended from the Settlement Area as

far north as the Pedernales River, virtually covering the present area of Johnson City (Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).

During this time, the vegetation at the Johnson Settlement Area is believed to have been a tall grass prairie and oak savannah. The overstory shaded 10 to 15 percent of the area and consisted primarily of live oak and post oak, while the understory was dominated by little bluestem, and in lesser amounts indiangrass, big bluestem, Canada wildrye, vine-mesquite, tall dropseed, and feathery bluestems (Carls and Gardener).

There was no effort to balance the numbers of livestock per acre and no methods of rotation or deferred grazing were used. This resulted in over-stocking without knowledge of its results on the land. Tall, high producing forage grasses were killed out by continued heavy use. Weeds and brush began to increase and spread as the heavy grasses began to die out. Short-grasses with shallow root systems began to increase and spread over the range. Soil erosion and runoff also increased as the taller prairie grasses disappeared.

In the years between 1867 and 1870 the Johnson brothers and Eliza Bunton made four annual five-week treks over the 600 miles along the Chisholm Trail, across the Red River to the railhead on the plains of Abilene, Kansas. Each trip was more successful than the previous and the Johnsons made huge profits. The brothers were noted in "Trail Drivers of Texas" as being the largest individual trail drivers in 1870 in Blanco, Gillespie, Llano, Burnet, Hays, Comal, and Kendall Counties (Caro, 20).

In 1870 the Johnsons drove 7000 cattle to the northern markets and returned home with \$100,000. After paying off their creditors, the brothers bought thousands of acres of land in Blanco, Hays, and Gillespie counties, in addition to real estate in Fredericksburg and Austin. They quickly became some of the largest landowners in the region (Dallek, 16).

Fehrenbach writes that, "Cowmen in whom wishful thinking was dominant, could not survive" (Caro, 28). In 1871, the Johnsons ventured up the Chisholm Trail with 10,000 cattle purchased on credit. Relying on their earlier successes, they borrowed money extensively in order to drive their largest herd to date. With the Comanches gone

and more settlers moving into Hill Country, the size of cattle herds had increased rapidly as had the number of trail drivers. By this time the grasses were decimated and the large number of cattle were fast consuming the grasses that held the fragile limestone soil in place and shielded it from the rain.

As it was no longer covered by vegetation, the central Texas soil began to wash away, leaving the land unsuitable for grazing or farming. Robert Caro writes that, “From one spring to the next, landscape changed. One year, a rancher would be looking contentedly at hills covered with grass – green, lush. The next spring, he would keep waiting for those hills to turn green, but they stayed brown – little grass, and that parched and bare soil showing through. And the next, he would suddenly realize that there was white on them, white visible through the brown – chalky, white, limestone white: the bare rock was showing through. Not only was the grass gone, in many places so was the soil in which new grass could grow” (Caro, 22). Thereafter, small, dense shrubs and stunted trees grew in the Hill Country pastures and spread quickly. Cedars now covered large parts of the region. Extremes of drought, wind, and floods were further challenges for settlers. Finally, the exposed limestone could neither be grazed nor plowed. This rich history of people and land profoundly altered the landscape of the Settlement Area over time.

In 1871 the trails were oversaturated with cattle, which resulted in financial disaster for the Johnsons who sold their cattle for less than they had intended. There was a recession in the northeast and cattle prices were dropping. Many cattle that year were not sold at all. Upon return to Hill Country, the Johnsons could not meet their debts and had to sell off most of the land and real estate that they had acquired in the years before (Caro 28-30).

A drought in 1872 coupled with a Comanche raid, in which the Johnsons lost some 250 to 300 horses, decimated the last of the Johnsons’ financial resources (Dallek, 16). Experiencing further losses, Sam Johnson sold the Settlement Area to his nephew James Polk Johnson in 1872 to avoid a court-ordered sale and to satisfy a debt (Caro, 30).



Following the sale of the property, Sam and Eliza left the Pedernales and moved to Lockhart near Eliza's family. In 1873 they moved to the plains of Buda where they lived on a farm and raised their children. All but one of their nine children was raised in Hays County. Finally in 1887, with the financial assistance of Eliza's father, they moved to a 900-acre farm on the Pedernales, just twelve miles from the original settlement area. They remained here for the next 25 years. Following the bust of the cattle business, the Johnsons struggled financially and were subsistence farmers for the remainder of their lives (Caro, 31). In 1915, Sam Johnson died of pneumonia in Stonewall, Texas, and Eliza Bunton passed away shortly thereafter in 1917, following a stroke in 1912 (Johnson, 71-73).

Following the sale of the Johnson Settlement Area in 1872, the property became the residence of James Polk Johnson, the namesake of Johnson City who laid out the town in 1879. James Polk Johnson worked extensively on the property making improvements, including building a barn (HB-11) with coursed stonewalls between 1879 and 1881, now known as the James Polk Johnson barn. James Polk Johnson also built a water tank on site during his tenure on the land (National Register of Historic Places nomination).

James Polk Johnson sold the southern portion of the ranch to John Bruckner, a German immigrant, in 1882. Bruckner's property included the dogtrot cabin (HB-7). Bruckner did not actually move onto the property until 1893 and thus Johnson continued to administer Bruckner's southern section of the property while continuing to live in the northern section of the property in a two-story frame house. During this time, a number of stone outbuildings were erected on the site. In 1884 Bruckner built a large stone barn with shed additions of board and batten construction now known as the Bruckner barn (HB-10). At some point during the 1880s a 14-foot pine windmill (HB-78) made by the Eclipse Company was erected in the northern section of the Johnson Settlement Area adjacent to the water tank.

Upon the death of James Polk Johnson's wife Julia Moore in 1896, James Polk Johnson's son-in-law N.T. Stubbs, a local judge, administered the property. During the

late 1890s, Judge N.T. Stubbs constructed a limestone well house (HB-12) for hot weather storage of perishable foods, east of the Johnson barn (HB-11). Thus, both Stubbs and Bruckner were making improvement to the property during this time period.

Upon moving to the property in 1893, the Bruckner family built a number of additions to the original dogtrot cabin (HB-7): a shed room, kitchen, dining room, and framed-ell. The shed room adjoined the south elevation of the east wing and was roofed with corrugated sheet metal. The kitchen was a detached frame structure southeast of the house with a loft and half window. The dining room adjoined the kitchen to the east. It was sheathed with siding with a puncheon roof and a door in the west elevation provided access to the dining room. The framed ell could be entered from the west wing of the dogtrot. While the original roof had been cypress shakes, by 1911 the shakes had been replaced by corrugated sheet metal, visible in historic photographs. Also during the Bruckner's tenure, in 1918 a two-story framed house near the James Polk Johnson barn burned down (National Register of Historic Places nomination).

In 1905 a one-story house (HB-99) was built for George T. Bryan, one of Johnson City's prominent merchants, on the east side of Town Creek. The house originally had a white clapboard exterior and the symmetrical front elevation had paired double-hung windows that flanked the central front door. The George T. Bryan house (now the Education Center) underwent changes to the siding, porch, and interiors in the 1920s.

Bruckner lived on the Johnson Settlement Area property for many years and at the time of his death in September 1931 his ranch consisted of 1,640 acres, with 125 acres under cultivation. Following the death of their parents, the Bruckner children divided the estate. Charles and Arthur Bruckner, W.N. and Emma Cox, L.E. and Clara Waller, D.R. and Ida Bushnell, Aaron and Hattie Lacey, and Lonnie and Pauline Gipson sold Fred O. Bruckner 47 acres of the property for \$10. This parcel was located in the northwest corner of the original Joseph Duel Survey that included the Johnson log cabin (Bearss, 188). The Bruckner family retained ownership of the southern section of the property until former President and Mrs. Johnson donated the funds to the National Park Service to purchase the property in 1972.

From 1968 through 1970, the Pedernales Hospital Authority constructed the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Hospital in Johnson City, which would later become the National Park Service Visitor Center and headquarters in Johnson City (National Register of Historic Places nomination).

In 1969 in recognition of the national significance of sites related to the life and heritage of Lyndon B. Johnson, president of the United States from 1963 through 1969, President Richard Nixon established the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Site. The park was established “in order to preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of Lyndon B. Johnson” (LBJ National Historical Park Archives). The Johnson Settlement Area was not a part of the original Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Site.

Shortly after the establishment of the park, President Johnson acquired a small portion, approximately 30 acres, of the original 320-acre homestead. The property extended west from Town Creek to Back Forty Road and from Main Street to north of the Bruckner barn (HB-10) and the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), but did not include the Bruckner barn or the log cabin. The property contained the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), N.T. Stubbs well house (HB-12), and windmill (HB-78). President Johnson offered to donate this land to the National Park Service if a suitable plan for its use was proposed.

In accordance to Johnson’s wishes, preliminary development maps were drafted for the area in 1970. A March 1970 letter regarding the development of the property, then referred to as the “Old Fort” land, as drafted by the park superintendent included the following long term plans (Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Archives):

1. Building a picnic area with all necessary utility features in the section near the pecan grove.
2. Designing and building a small visitor center contact station.
3. Stabilizing and eventually restoring the original stone buildings and use audio tapes, interpretive signs, and other appropriate devices as needed to tell the story of these structures.
4. Planning and constructing a history-nature trail “to take the visitor from the contact center, by the historical buildings, and through the grounds...”

5. The recommendation to “minimize roads and parking... The visitor should experience the area primarily by foot.

Plans drafted shortly thereafter demonstrate many of these proposed recommendations. Picnic areas and parking areas were proposed amongst the pecan groves at the east side of the property and footpaths were proposed through the western section. In addition, a Visitor Contact station was proposed in the middle of the parcel, and the park entrance was planned for the northwest corner off of Highway 290, just east of Back Forty Road.

Plans and recommendations for the 30-acre parcel continued throughout the early 1970s. One document, “The Guidelines for the Proposed Development Sam Ealy Johnson Farm” divided the proposed work into three phases. Phase I involved the installation of utilities, construction of the entrance road, parking area, picnic sites, and comfort station, and entrance and information signs. Phase II involved the stabilization of stone barns, construction of interpretive footpaths, and installation of audio devices. Phase III entailed the construction of a Visitor Center contact station.

Another Development Concept Plan for the Settlement Area expressed the varied needs for the National Park Service in appropriately interpreting and developing the area. It states, “Motorized vehicles are not allowed in the Johnson Settlement. At the Settlement Area, the NPS has acquired barely enough land, or interests in land, to effectively present the sights and sounds of Grandfather Johnson’s day through exhibits, restored buildings, living history program and longhorn cattle grazing in the fields.” The document describes the necessity to acquire more land, including lands between the temporary Visitor Center located at the corner of Elm Street and Avenue G and the Settlement Area, and lands to the south including the Johnson log cabin (HB-7) and pastures to graze animals. Other desired lands included parcels adjacent to Highway 290 in the eastern part of the property. It also describes the ultimate necessity to preserve the buildings and to build new fences in the area (Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Archives). Many of these concepts expressed in 1970 contributed to the development of the park in the following years.

In 1971, a Historic Resource Study was completed by historian Edward Bearss that documented the history of the buildings and structures on the property. The study stated the following:

The exterior and interior of the log dogtrot ranch house can be restored to their appearance, circa 1870. It can be furnished with period furnishings. The three stone structures should be stabilized. These structures, along with some of the corrals which can be reconstructed, can be used to interpret to the visitor life on the Texas frontier in the period 1856-1900, with emphasis on the short-lived cattle empire of Sam and Tom Johnson (Bearss, 183).

As part of the study, Bearss included a basemap, presumably completed in 1970 or 1971, that shows post and rail fences and barbed wire fences dividing all of the standing buildings and structures on the property. For example, a north-south post and rail fence divided the Bruckner barn (HB-10) from the Johnson log cabin (HB-7). A continuous east-west barbed wire fence divided the Bruckner barn (HB-10) and Johnson log cabin (HB-7) from the northern area of the property.

Bearss' Historic Resource Study also includes a description of proposed long-term construction activities for the operation of the park. This includes removing the Bruckner additions to the log cabin (HB-7), stabilizing and rehabilitating the log cabin, rebuilding the west chimney of the log cabin, and stabilizing three stone outbuildings (HB-10, HB-11, and HB-12). Representative corrals were to be constructed, and the grounds were to be restored to their original appearance (Bearss, 184).

Ultimately, the President donated the funds for the further acquisition of adjacent southern lands that included the Johnson log cabin (HB-7) and Bruckner barn (HB-10). This transaction was complete by 1972 (undated Johnson Settlement Area tour brochure). After this property acquisition, the Settlement Area included a total of six original structures. These were the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), the Bruckner barn (HB-10), the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), the N.T. Stubbs well house (HB-12), the Eclipse windmill (HB-78), and the Johnson water well (HB-007.A).

Plans by the National Park Service to develop the Johnson Settlement Area into an interpretive landscape were realized in the autumn of 1972 when plans for an extensive restoration and reconstruction project were executed.

As part of the project, the National Park Service restored the Johnson dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) to the 1869-1872 period when newlyweds Samuel Ealy Johnson and Eliza Bunton occupied the building. The later additions made by the Bruckners were removed, which returned the building to its original dogtrot style. The old mortar and chinking were removed, the foundation was raised and concrete footings were poured, and decayed logs were replaced with logs from other old cabins of the area. The house was rechinked and the mortar used was made in the same manner as the original mortar except that a small amount of cement was added to the sand, unslaked lime, and water mixture for durability. The two fireplaces were rebuilt using the original stone. The house was reroofed in hand-split cypress shingles made at the site.

In addition to the log cabin (HB-7), several other buildings, including the Bruckner barn (HB-11), N.T. Stubbs well house (HB-12), and windmill (HB-78), were restored in 1972. At the Bruckner barn all of the original mortar was removed and new mortar was applied using the same methods as that for the log cabin. The roof was replaced with red cedar shingles. Though the barn originally had a roof of yellow cedar shingles, these were not commercially available, so red cedar shingles were used and treated to give the appearance of the original coloring. Similarly, the N.T. Stubbs well house was remortared and reroofed with red cedar shingles. The windmill was restored with yellow pine.

The NPS also restored the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11) in the early 1970s, likely between 1972 and 1973. The building was reroofed in hand-split cypress shingles. Inside the building, the corn crib, hay loft, granary, tack room, mule stall, and wagon storage were also restored.

In addition to the aforementioned restorations, a series of reconstructions were executed by the National Park Service to add to the interpretive historic scene. Reconstructed buildings included the Johnson smokehouse (HB-8), privy (HB-9), and a

water tank (HB-79). The Johnson smokehouse reconstruction was done in 1972 using logs from two old cabins in the area. It was roofed in the hand-split cypress shingles. The privy was also reconstructed that same year. It was of squared-oak log construction, chinked with lime mortar and tree-nailed corners and a puncheon floor. Sometime between 1972 and 1973, the water tank was rebuilt of cypress. All reconstructed buildings were erected on their original foundations.

In addition to the reconstructed buildings, the National Park Service also built two additional buildings that were never historically on the property. The first of these was a blacksmith shop of single-wall construction on a stone pier foundation with weathered cedar board-and-batten siding. Built in 1972, the building had two central doors flanked by window openings on each long axis. The gabled ends each had a central pedestrian door. The second structure was a chicken house (BLDG-15) with board and batten siding and a cedar shingled roof built between 1972 and 1973. Neither of these buildings were part of the original Johnson Settlement, but were constructed in order to contribute to the historic scene. The blacksmith shop was removed in 2008, but the chicken coop is still standing south of the Bruckner barn (HB-10).

From 1970 through 1972, the fencing at the Johnson Settlement Area was constructed. Rail fences were put along the road for aesthetic purposes and along the south side of the log cabin. With minimal documentation of historic fencing, there were no historic plans to follow. The crew, led by Bobby Flickinger, copied fence styles that were present in the area at the time. In one case, 6,000 tons of stone from an existing stone wall in Blanco County was moved to the property; this stone was used in the construction of the stone wall near the James Polk Johnson barn and the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) (Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management).

In addition to the buildings and structures, other small-scale features were added to the landscape. Accompanying signage, utilities, and interpretation for the property were added to as indicated in the original development plans. Circulation routes were also added to facilitate visitor movement throughout the area. Photographs from the early 1970s indicate that a dirt footpath around the buildings and structures was in place by

1972 when the restorations took place. This was the nature trail mentioned in the 1970 development plans that minimized automobile access to the Johnson Settlement Area.

In 1973, a two-story Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) and accompanying picnic area were constructed to the southeast of the cluster of historic buildings and structures to serve as an introduction to the historic area. Development plans from this time include a wagon road from the Visitor Center at the corner of Elm Street and Avenue G that crosses the eastern section of the Settlement Area diagonally, which at the time was dominated by pecan trees, to the Exhibit/Event Center. Visitors would then circulate through the area of restored and reconstructed buildings and structures by foot on the nature trail. The wagon road was constructed a year later in 1974.

That same year management plans proposed the “consolidation of major LBJ sites in and around Johnson City into a single management unit operated by the National Park Service. This enlarged Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park would be composed of essentially two units – Johnson City properties and the Ranch Area.” (1973 Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Management Plan). Thereafter, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park contained five component landscapes located in Johnson City and west of town.

As plans continued to be developed for the area, Lyndon B. Johnson died from a heart attack at age 63 on January 22, 1973.

#### Post-period of Significance: 1974-Present

Following the death of Lyndon B. Johnson, the Johnson Settlement Area opened to the public in 1974 (undated Johnson Settlement Area tour brochure). The original entrance to the Johnson Settlement Area was in the northeastern part of the property from Elm Street where the temporary Visitor Center was located. Visitors approached the historic building cluster either on wagon or by foot. A dirt footpath went from the Visitor Center on Elm Street, crossed over Town Creek by way of a footbridge, followed the creek to the south, and then veered west toward the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) (LBJ National Historical Park Archives). The dirt wagon road diagonally traversed the



eastern part of the property. At the time pecan trees populated the area and the wagon traveled from the entrance at Elm Street southwest across the field to the Exhibit/Event Center (LBJ National Historical Park Archives photographs). From there, the buildings would then be experienced by foot.

During the mid-1970s, the National Park Service continued to develop the area in accordance to planning documents and Johnson's wishes. In 1974, the National Park Service began leasing the the land in the "Back 40" Area from at least three different property owners. Development plans from the time indicate the intention to buy all of the property associated with the "Back 40" Area.

That same year the National Park Service constructed the "Back 40" Area maintenance buildings on the leased land. These included two "Back 40" wagon storage buildings (BLDG – 49 and BLDG – 47), and the "Back 40" feed and tack storage building (BLDG – 56). Additionally, in 1977 the Sprayer Storage Building (BLDG - 52) located east of Back Forty Road was constructed (National Register of Historic Places nomination).

Also in the 1970s, the National Park Service established a management objective to restore the main pasture on the property to a mixed-grass prairie. Due to the compromised nature of the historic vegetation, prairie restoration has been a central goal in management efforts by the National Park Service.

In 1980, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Site was renamed to become the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Park. In addition to the name change, Congress authorized the park to further acquire land in Johnson City. Shortly thereafter, the National Park Service acquired the George T. Bryan House on the east side of Town Creek for use as a park residence.

In the spring of 1980, a soil and water conservation plan was completed by the Blanco County Unit, Soil Conservation Service. The plan indicated current soil conditions (reported as poor-fair), seeding recommendations, and grazing recommendations. Five-year recommendations were established for range seeding, weed

control, prescribed burn, proper grazing use, and recreation area improvement (Soil and Water Conservation Plan).

In 1982, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawings were completed of the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), Bruckner barn (HB-10), and the Johnson Barn (HB-11) of the Settlement Area (LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

In 1986 a Development Concept Plan for the Johnson Settlement Area suggested constructing a horse corral in the northeastern part of the property and establishing longhorn grazing in the major open pasture between Johnson City streets and the location of the historic building cluster. By this time a chuck wagon was situated south of the Bruckner barn (HB-10) and the wagon road running through the property was abandoned, leaving only the loop footpath as the primary means of accessing the Johnson Settlement Area. Additionally, the pecan groves had been thinned out, becoming far less dense in the eastern region of the Johnson Settlement Area than during the 1970s, giving the appearance of an open pasture (1986 Development Concept Plan).

A 1986 historic vegetation study continued to provide planning guidance and recommendations for the Settlement Area. The study, conducted for the entire park, concluded that “The overall aspect of the Settlement, its grooming and upkeep, does not at this time provide the visitor with a true sense of a working ranch during the historic period.” Following this guidance, a Cultural Resource Management Plan was put forth in 1988, proposing the cultivation of more native grasses, berries and weeds, the relocation of the chuck wagon, and continued preservation maintenance (Carls and Gardner).

By the 1990s, additional plans were well underway to improve the visitor experience at the park. In 1990 the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Hospital (HB-100) on Ladybird Lane was acquired by the National Park Service with plans to convert it into the park Visitor Center and Headquarters adjacent to the Johnson Settlement Area. Prior to the acquisition, from 1970 through 1985 the building housed a number of medical offices before closing partially in 1985 and fully by 1988.

By 1994 the Visitor Center and Headquarters (HB-100) was completed with new parking lots, a new stormwater system, irrigation systems, signs, walks, curbing, and

other street improvements. Utilities were also upgraded at this time. Asphalt drives were built to access parking areas, the service dock delivery area, and two covered building entrances. Concrete sidewalks were poured leading from the parking and drop-off locations to the main entrance on the first and basement levels.

Landscape improvements included new topsoil and some tree removal in the Visitor Center and Johnson Settlement Areas. Large spreading oak trees, native and ornamental shrubs, ivy ground cover, and lawn grass areas were also planted. Further, new directional signage, trash receptacles, and benches were added (Visitor Center Completion Report). . To commemorate the previous use of the building, five memorial sites were built on the property. These sites, consisting of planting beds, dedicated trees, granite markers, and wooden benches, were dedicated to former patients and civic leaders of the community (National Register of Historic Places nomination).

Changes also occurred within the Johnson Settlement Area at this time. In 1992, an ADA accessible trail, new signs and waysides, and a shuttle bus service were added (LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

Alterations in the circulation patterns of the property continued into the mid-1990s. In 1995 a new trail was completed with new plantings that extended from the new Visitor Center (HB-100) to the Settlement Area. This changed the entry sequence of the area, as visitors now accessed the site from Ladybird Lane rather than entering the property from Elm Street (LBJ National Park Archives). Two years later in 1997, a new parking lot was added to the Visitor Center area.

Also in 1997, a vegetation inventory was conducted by the University of Texas at Austin to further define strategies for vegetation restoration to return the area to its pre-Settlement appearance. A 1999 assessment listed the project objectives as: “reestablishing native late-successional grasses and forbs into the area, reducing the abundance and attempting to eliminate Johnsongrass and KR Bluestem, assessing the woody plant species at the Johnson Settlement Area and developing a plan to reduce unwanted species, and developing a vegetation monitoring system to evaluate the rate and direction of vegetation change on the site” (Native Prairie Restoration and

Monitoring on the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, Johnson City, Texas). The same assessment found that reseeding attempts had been largely unsuccessful due to drought though the Johnsongrass had been substantially reduced. As a result, a vegetation monitoring system was developed.

By the late 1990s the George T. Bryan House (HB-99) was converted into the Education Center for educational programming at the Johnson Settlement Area. Around the same time in 1998, the National Park Service acquired buffer properties around the Settlement Area for reuse and constructed new maintenance facilities outside of the Settlement Area in Johnson City south of Main Street (LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

In 1999 a General Management Plan for the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park was completed. For the Johnson City Unit, the plan advocated the continued acquisition of small tracts of land in Johnson City within the park authorized boundary. It also suggested the park begin working with the city on its comprehensive plan. At the Johnson Settlement Area, the plan recommended prescribed burns within the pasture areas to eliminate non-native plants and to establish pre-settlement conditions. Roads throughout the Settlement Area were to be maintained unless deemed unnecessary for maintenance or visitor access.

During this time, the 15 acres that dominate the eastern part of the Johnson Settlement Area underwent further prairie restoration (LBJ National Historical Park Archives). Further management decisions were made regarding practices of burning, mowing, and grazing. More pecan trees were also removed to restore the landscape's pre-settlement appearance (LBJ National Historical Park Archives correspondence).

More recently, landscape alterations have largely focused on sustaining previous initiatives. Between 2004 and 2008, parts of the boundary fence erected between 1970 and 1972 were replaced. In 2008, the 1972 Blacksmith Shop was removed from the property (LBJ National Historical Park Archives). Additionally, prairie restoration efforts have continued through prescribed burns since the early 2000s.

Today, the Johnson Settlement Area is an historic zone dominated by an open pastoral landscape with scenic views that suggests the ranching activities of President Johnson's grandparents. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century through present day the Johnson Settlement Area has undergone numerous changes. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century management efforts of the National Park Service, in coalition with the planning and acquisition efforts of President Johnson, are significant in the history of the property. This land of extremes was experienced by Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton and has been interpreted by the National Park Service to convey a part of Lyndon B. Johnson's identity and heritage. In sum, the Johnson Settlement Area continues to reflect the social and cultural heritage of President Johnson and the pre-presidential Johnson legacy in the Texas Hill Country.

### *History Graphic Information*



Figure 8: John Bruckner and family in front of the log cabin (HB-7) with water well (HB-7.A) and numerous trees visible, circa 1911 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 9: Lyndon Johnson and Berry Roebuck, who drove cattle with Sam Johnson, show Lynda Bird Johnson where her great-grandmother Eliza Bunton hid under the log cabin (HB-7) during a Comanche raid, circa late 1940s (Source: Johnson).

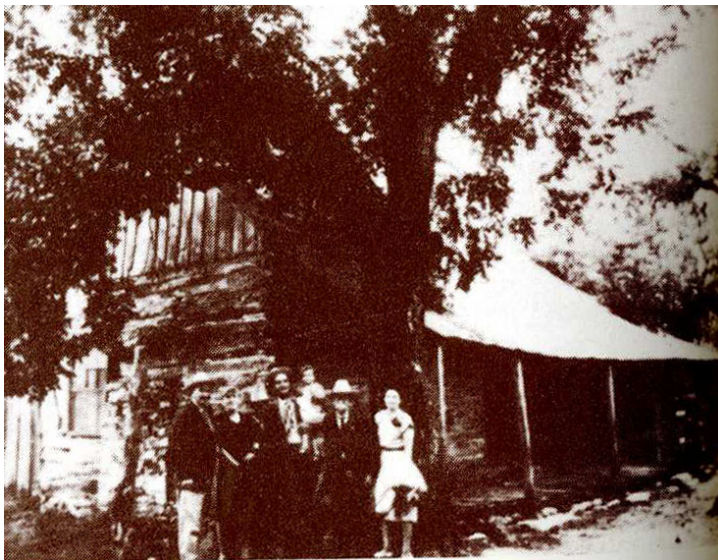


Figure 10: Lyndon Johnson, Lady Bird, Lynda Bird, Berry Roebuck, Tom Johnson, and Rebekah Baines Johnson visit the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), circa late 1940s (Source: Johnson).





Figure 11: Lyndon Johnson at the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), 1969 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 12: Johnson log cabin (HB-7) south elevation, prior to restoration with Bruckner additions and well visible, 1964 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).







Figure 15: Johnson log cabin (HB-7), south elevation, prior to restoration, circa 1970-1971 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 16: Johnson log cabin (HB-7) restoration in progress, 1972 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



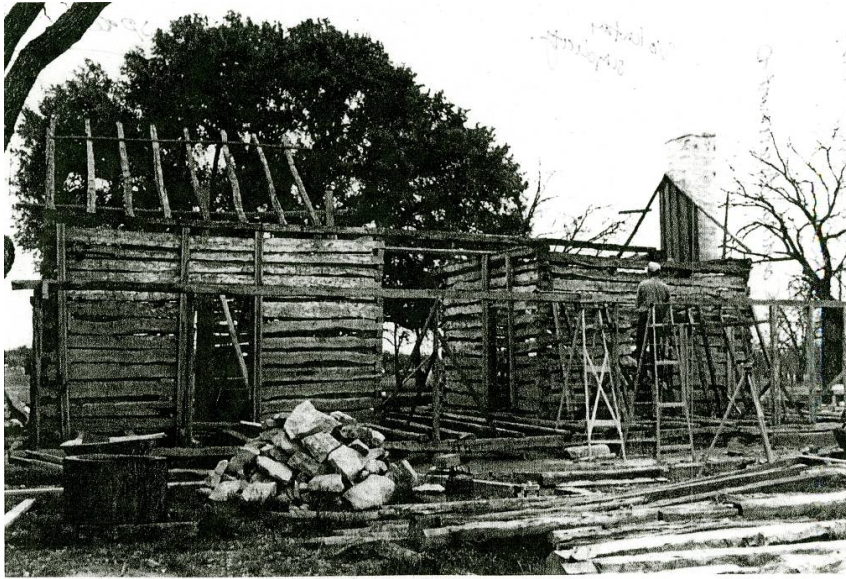


Figure 17: Johnson log cabin (HB-7) restoration in progress, 1972 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

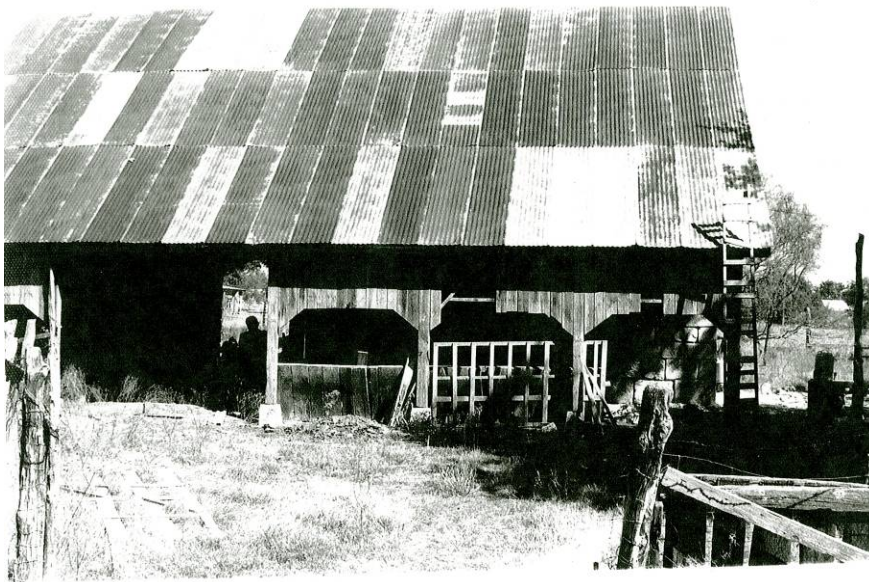


Figure 18: Bruckner barn (HB-10), south elevation, October 1972 (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 19: Open pastures dominated by trees, 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 20: Restored James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11) and reconstructed fences with restored windmill (HB-78), water tank (HB-79), and restored well house (HB-12) in background, 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 21: From left to right, the reconstructed Johnson smokehouse (HB-8), restored log cabin (HB-7), and reconstructed privy (HB-9), with newly constructed chicken house (BLDG-15) and restored Bruckner barn (HB-10) at far right, 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 22: Restored Johnson log cabin (HB-7) on left with reconstructed privy (HB-9) and smokehouse (HB-8), 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



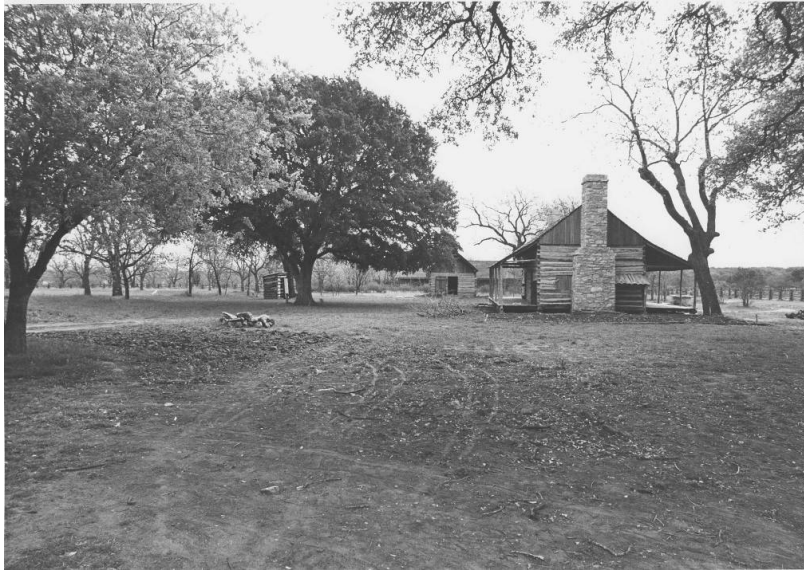


Figure 23: On right, the restored Johnson log cabin (HB-7) west elevation with reconstructed smokehouse (HB-8) and privy (HB-9) in background, 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 24: On left, the restored Bruckner barn (HB-10) southern elevation with farm equipment and chickens in open pasture, and restored Johnson log cabin (HB-7) in background, 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 25: Pasture with reconstructed fences, date unknown (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).



Figure 26: Aerial view looking east into the Johnson Settlement Area in relation to Johnson City, with Highway 290 visible, date unknown, likely mid to late 1970s (Source: LBJ National Historical Park Archives).

## **Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity**

### **ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY**

The landscape of the Johnson Settlement Area is dominated by open pastures, a cluster of agriculture-related restored and reconstructed buildings and structures, and numerous fences, pens and corrals that are representative of the property's agricultural frontier history. There is also a small cluster of visitor-related services in Johnson City to the east and a cluster of maintenance facilities for the management of the Johnson Settlement Area located in the southern section of the property.

For the purposes of the Cultural Landscape Inventory, landscapes are analyzed according to a number of criteria, known as landscape characteristics. These characteristics include archeological sites, buildings and structures, circulation, cluster arrangement, constructed water features, cultural traditions, land use, natural systems and features, small-scale features, spatial organization, topography, vegetation, and views and vistas. All of the landscape characteristics contribute to the historic character of the Johnson Settlement Area.

Landscapes are also evaluated on the seven aspects of integrity defined by the National Register of Historic Places. The Johnson Settlement Area retains historic integrity in aspects of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Although the original remote rural setting has been compromised with the growth of Johnson City around the Settlement Area since the days of Samuel Ealy Johnson and Eliza Bunton, the period of significance extends through 1973, a date that encompasses the years that much of this development occurred. The seven aspects of integrity collectively convey the sense of a working ranch and frontier history.

## ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY

### *1. Location*

The location of the Johnson Settlement Area retains historic integrity. The area administered as the Johnson Settlement Area that served as the center of Lyndon Johnson's grandparents ranching operation in addition to other agricultural activities, is in its original location. While the interpretive site is smaller than the original 320-acre settlement obtained by the Johnson brothers, the locations of the Johnson Settlement Area's significant features have not changed.

The integrity of location is predominantly illustrated by the locations of the cluster of buildings and structures. All restored and reconstructed buildings have been executed on or near their original locations. Thus, the spatial organization and cluster arrangement are akin to during the historic period. Additionally, the locations of maintenance facilities in the "Back 40" Area have not changed. Likewise, the location of the visitor-related buildings, the Education Center (HB-99) and the Visitor Center (HB-100), formerly the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Hospital, are in their original locations.

However, other landscape features are not in their historic locations. Changes to circulation patterns have removed some paths and roads, thus integrity of location is not retained for those features. Similarly, reconstructed livestock pens and corrals are not in their historic locations; these locations are unknown. Pens and corrals, in addition to the pastures, would have covered a much wider terrain during the historic period. However, as the National Park Service built the reconstructed fences between 1970 and 1972 as an important part of their planning and development of the Settlement Area, they fall within the period of significance.

Despite these changes over time and loss of some features, integrity of location is largely retained.



## ***2. Design***

The design of the Johnson Settlement Area has not changed greatly since the period of significance. The integrity of design is illustrated by the cluster arrangement of restored and reconstructed agricultural buildings. Integrity of design is also illustrated by the cluster arrangement of maintenance buildings in the “Back 40” Area in the southern part of the property and its relation to the historic building cluster to the north.

The design of the Settlement Area largely demonstrates the functions of a working agricultural landscape on the early Texas frontier. As a vernacular design, the buildings form a rough semi-circle on the western side of the Johnson Settlement Area. Historically, buildings and structures were grouped according to function. As the restorations and reconstructions were completed in the 1970s, the spatial layout of the buildings was retained, and the buildings and structures continue to relate to one another as they would have during the historic period.

The design of the “Back 40” Area cluster conveys a concentration of maintenance facilities necessary in the management and maintenance of an historic interpretive landscape. Planned during the period of significance, the cluster in the “Back 40” Area is within easy access of the cluster of restorations and reconstructions, but out of view from visitors. The design thus reflects National Park Service planning for the management of the area.

## ***3. Setting***

The Settlement Area is no longer an isolated homestead as it was historically, but rather easily accessible and integrated into the town of Johnson City. Johnson City has grown substantially since the beginning of the period of significance in 1864. By 1973, the end of the period of significance, the city had a population of approximately 800 residents. Today, modern houses and conveniences are within visible range of the Johnson Settlement Area, and thus, the setting has changed due to the growth of the city around the Settlement Area since Johnson’s grandparents occupied the property.

The property is also much smaller than the original 320-acre settlement, no longer a vast rural setting, creating a profoundly different experience for the visitors. Since Highway 290 runs immediately north of the property, automobile traffic is visible and audible from throughout the park. Modern signage, benches, utilities, and other small-scale features added during the period of significance also detract from the original 19<sup>th</sup> Century setting.

However, since the period of significance extends from 1864 to 1973, it also encompasses this change in setting. Though the landscape no longer reflects the setting of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century homestead, it does closely align to the setting that was present in the 1970s. The setting has thus changed greatly throughout the period of significance. Accordingly, the Johnson Settlement Area maintains integrity in setting as relates to the 1970s. However, since the setting has changed greatly from when settlers first arrived in central Texas, integrity of setting has been diminished for the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

#### ***4. Materials***

Integrity of materials is mainly displayed in the restored and reconstructed buildings of the area. The building reconstructions and restorations completed by the National Park Service at the Johnson Settlement Area during the early 1970s were constructed of materials akin to those found during the historic period. As a result, the historic materials have not been compromised or replaced with modern equivalents. For example, when restoring the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), the original stones from the chimneys were used in the restoration. Decayed logs were replaced with sound logs from other historic cabins from the area. In addition, all reconstructions completed in the early 1970s were built to match the 19<sup>th</sup> Century restorations. The materials, mainly limestone and logs, thus maintain historic integrity and correspond to what would have been available to settlers in rural and remote Texas historically.

## ***5. Workmanship***

Integrity of workmanship is present at the Johnson Settlement Area. The building reconstructions and restorations completed in the 1970s by the National Park Service reflect the vernacular architectural styles of the location, time, and context representative of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural landscape. The craftsmanship in the features is still evident. Restorations conform to their original appearance and reconstructions resemble the craftsmanship of the historic period.

## ***6. Feeling***

The Johnson Settlement Area retains integrity of feeling for Texas frontier heritage and associated cattle ranching and farming. The cumulative effect of the natural systems and features, buildings and structures, cluster arrangement, small-scale features, land use, and cultural traditions at the Settlement Area contribute to the integrity of feeling. In particular, the farm and agriculture related small-scale features, the open pastures with native tall grasses, and the pens and corrals containing longhorns and horses contribute to a strong sense of time and place at the Settlement Area. The feeling of the Texas frontier, particularly an early cattle ranch, is maintained through the physical characteristics of the Johnson Settlement Area. Further, ongoing efforts to restore the native plants to pre-settlement conditions in the open pastures contribute to the integrity of feeling.

## ***7. Association***

As the former home and ranching base for Johnson's grandparents, the buildings, structures, and associated landscape features all contribute to the association with the Texas cattle frontier and with the farmers' frontier. Through the planning and management efforts of the National Park Service, the Johnson Settlement Area displays integrity in its association with the heritage of former president Lyndon B. Johnson and greater Texas frontier traditions and lifestyles. The landscape is also associated with the

development of the American economy and agricultural traditions. Further, the vernacular architecture of the buildings and structures also relate an association with the cultural institutions of ranchers, farmers, settlers, and German immigrant communities.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS**

### ***1. Archeological Sites***

As no recent archeological investigations have been executed at the Johnson Settlement Area, no distinct archeological sites have been identified. However, investigation in and around the area may yield information about the period of significance and how early settlers lived and worked in central Texas.

Since the landscape has been employed in various ways since the purchase by James Provost of the 320-acre tract, the entire Johnson Settlement Area and beyond is a potential archeological site. Artifacts may be embedded or located around the original restored structures and in the open pastures. The entire site has potential to yield and convey information relevant to the historic significance and Texas frontier heritage.

In addition, the original settlement was much larger than the current boundaries of the Johnson Settlement Area and there are thus likely relevant artifacts throughout Johnson City that reflect the historic period. For example, remnants of the original fences, pens, and corrals may be around the property and off site in greater Johnson City.

#### **CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:**

Potential archeological sites dating to the period of significance

#### **NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:**

Potential archeological sites dating after the period of significance

## ***2. Buildings and Structures***

The buildings and structures at the Johnson Settlement Area reflect a range of activities and a wide period of time. The buildings and structures at the Johnson Settlement Area reflect a range of activities and a wide period of time. With a period of significance from 1864 through 1973, the buildings and structures at the Johnson Settlement Area have been added to the property throughout this time period.

The buildings and structures passed through several phases as a frontier settlement and then later as an interpretive site managed by the National Park Service. The first phase began in 1856 with James Provost's purchase of 320 acres of the Joseph Duel Survey. Provost and his wife, the first resident landowners, erected the west section of what later became a dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) with a stone fireplace. The Provosts also erected a bush corral and several modest outbuildings.

The second phase, 1864-1872, saw the Johnsons occupy the vast acreage. They built the east addition to the dogtrot log cabin (HB-7) that they inhabited during this time period. They obtained a fee simple title to the land in 1869 and worked their open-range cattle business on the property and built a few practical outbuildings, likely the smokehouse, privy, and well. A number of fences were also built between 1864 and 1869.

After the collapse of the ranching operation, Sam Ealy Johnson's nephew, James Polk Johnson purchased and lived on the property in 1872. During his tenure, a water tank, stone barn (HB-11), and windmill (HB-78) were built.

In 1882 James Polk Johnson sold a portion of the property to John Bruckner who did not actually move to the property until 1893. During this phase, the first years of John Bruckner's occupation of the property, a second stone barn (HB-10) was erected. A well house (HB-12) was also constructed during this time by Judge N.T. Stubbs.

Throughout the 1900s, the land was subdivided as Johnson City grew. In 1905, the George T. Bryan House was constructed on a parcel historically part of the Settlement Area. Later in 1918, a two-story framed house near the James Polk Johnson barn burned

down. Buildings and structures as part of the Settlement Area likely remained with few alterations. However, as land use shifted away from grazing, the buildings and structures likely deteriorated and were removed. Sometime during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the smokehouse, privy, water tank, and fences were removed. By the time the National Park Service acquired the property, only the dog-trot cabin (HS-7), two stone barns (HB-10 and HB-11), well house (HB-12), and windmill (HB-78) remained.

During the early 1970s, after acquiring the property, the National Park Service restored the standing historic buildings and structures on the property: the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), the N.T. Stubbs well house (HB-12), the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), the Bruckner barn (HB-10), and the Eclipse windmill (HB-78). The National Park Service also executed a number of reconstructions on the property to contribute to the historic scene. These projects included the smokehouse, privy, water tank, and fences. All of which were completed during the period of significance and are considered to be contributing.

Additional changes were made to the buildings and structures throughout the 1970s. For the management of the property, maintenance facilities (BLDG – 49, BLDG – 47, BLDG – 56) were planned and constructed in the southernmost part of the property, known as the “Back 40” Area. A blacksmith shop and chicken coop were also built, though they were not historically found on the property. In 1970-1972 a stone wall was built near the James Polk Johnson barn. Around this same time, the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) was also constructed.

More recently, the National Park Service acquired the George T. Bryan House (HB-99) in 1980 and converted it into the Educational Center. In 1990, the park acquired the LBJ Memorial Hospital (HB-100), built in 1968-1970, to convert it into the park Visitor Center and Headquarters building. Various sheds have also been added to the landscape for storage purposes.

Today, there are a number of buildings and structures remaining within the Settlement Area landscape. Each is detailed with more information below.

*The Johnson Log Cabin or The Sam Ealy Johnson, Sr. Log House (HB-7, LCS 005713)*

James Provost built the west wing of the dogtrot building with a stone fireplace around 1856 and the Johnsons added the east wing in the 1860s. The cabin was constructed with hand-hewn squared oak logs with lime mortar chinking and daubed interstices. There are large end chimneys of coursed limestone, mortared with lime and red clay, on both the east and west elevations. The cabin has a gabled roof with cypress shanks and is approximately 20 feet tall.

When the cattle ranching venture failed in 1872, Sam Johnson's nephew James Polk Johnson, the namesake of Johnson City, purchased and occupied the property. He made several improvements to the cabin. John Bruckner who purchased the property from James Polk Johnson in 1882 added several rooms to the dogtrot cabin including a shed room, kitchen, dining room, and framed-ell. By 1911 the roof of the expanded structure was covered with corrugated sheet metal.

Through restoration work undertaken by the NPS in 1972, the cabin was returned to its former dogtrot form with hand-hewn squared-oak logs chinked with lime mortar, a gabled roof, and massive coursed lime-end chimneys at the east and west elevations. All of the later additions made by the Bruckners were removed. The old mortar and chinking were removed, the foundation was raised and concrete footings were poured, and decayed logs were replaced with logs from other old cabins of the area. The house was rechinked and the mortar used was made in the same manner as the original mortar except that a small amount of cement was added to the sand, unslaked lime, and water mixture for durability. The two fireplaces were rebuilt using the original stone. The house was reroofed in hand-split cypress shingles made at the site.

Today plexiglass covers the entrance and windows to provide views to exhibits inside the dogtrot building. The cabin is currently furnished with artifacts that convey the domestic life of Eliza Bunton and Sam Ealy Johnson. There are wide porches on both the south and north elevations with benches and chairs for visitors.

*Johnson Log Cabin Well (HB-007.A, LCS 258479)*

Overlooked in the National Register nomination for the site, the log cabin well provided water for the home of Samuel Johnson and Eliza Bunton. Located immediately southeast of the log cabin (HB-7), the well is of circular limestone masonry, approximately 4 feet in diameter with stone capping. It is 18 feet deep and was likely constructed around 1856 with the expansion of the dogtrot cabin.

*Johnson Log Cabin Smokehouse (HB-8, LCS 005714)*

Reconstructed in 1972, the National Park Service built the Johnson log cabin smokehouse on its original site. The smokehouse has a stone foundation and hand-hewn squared oak log construction with lime mortar chinking. It has an earthen floor with a central stone-ringed smoke pit and a cedar shingle gabled roof. The smokehouse is located northeast of the Johnson log cabin and is intended to add to the 1860s historic scene in the Settlement Area. It is eligible for the National Register under Criterion Consideration E as an accurate reconstruction in a suitable environment.

*Johnson Log Cabin Privy (HB-9, LCS 005715)*

The privy is of squared-oak log construction, chinked with lime mortar and tree-nailed corners and a puncheon floor. The reconstruction was completed in 1972 and has a shed roof of split wood logs with alternating seams; supported by load bearing walls of hand hewn, squared oak logs with mortar chinking; and resting on limestone block piers.

Entry into the privy is achieved by stepping onto a limestone block step through a batten door on the south elevation, and onto a puncheon floor. Concealed beneath the wood seat of the privy are the electrical alarm system boxes for use by the park personnel in the Johnson log cabin. The Johnson log cabin privy is a National Park Service reconstruction, situated on its original location, northeast of the Johnson Log Cabin.

The privy is eligible for the National Register under Criterion Consideration E as an accurate reconstruction in a suitable environment.



*John Bruckner Barn (HB-10, LCS 000878)*

In 1884, after purchasing a portion of the Settlement Area from James Polk Johnson, Bruckner built the large two-story stone barn. It is a dogtrot style stone structure with a limestone foundation and coursed limestone walls. The limestone averages 18 inches in thickness. Stone for the barn was quarried in the hills to the south and hauled to the property in ox carts that Bruckner owned. The thick walls maintained a relatively cool environment for perishables. The barn has a wooden floor and a cedar shingle gabled roof supported by a triangular truss. The two rooms off the central breezeway are approximately 10 inches above grade. The second floor is a hayloft with a cedar plank floor and single wallboard and batten construction. The doublewide entry door is located on the north of the barn and showcases rusted hinges and vertical wooden boards. There is a single window on the east elevation of a similar character. There are multiple windows on the second story. To the east, west, and south are shed additions of single-wall, board-and-batten construction.

The barn reflects German immigrant architecture of the period. It is considered a Pennsylvania Dutch design with narrow holes in the limestone for ventilation. The National Park Service restored the Bruckner barn in 1972.

*James Polk Johnson Barn, or James Polk Johnson Stone Horse Barn (HB-11, LCS 005716)*

The James Polk Johnson barn has a stone foundation and has coursed limestone walls that are approximately eight feet high, a wood and dirt floor, and a cedar shingle gabled roof.

Sometime after acquiring the Johnson Settlement Area, James Polk Johnson had this coursed stone barn erected in which to shelter several horses. Likely built between 1879 and 1881, this structure is enclosed on three sides and open to the south with wide wooden doors to access the open space. Subsequently, the east half of the building and lofts were built to provide storage space. There are narrow holes in the limestone walls

for ventilation. The National Park Service restored the barn in the early 1970s, likely between 1972 and 1973. During restoration, the barn was reroofed with hand-split cypress shingles and the interior corn crib, hay loft, granary, tack room, mule stall, and wagon storage were all restored.

*N.T. Stubbs Well House (HB-12, LCS 005717)*

Located to the northeast of the Johnson Barn, the N.T. Stubbs Well House was restored by the National Park Service in 1972 and is of coursed limestone construction. In addition it has a stone foundation, a cedar shingled gabled roof, and a dirt floor. During restoration the building was remortared and reroofed with red cedar shingles.

Judge N.T. Stubbs, son in law of James Polk Johnson, erected the small almost square structure in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and used it for hot weather storage of perishable foods. Entrance into the well house is through a single wooden door on the south side of the structure.

*The Eclipse Windmill (HB-78, LCS 005741)*

The 21-foot tall windmill, restored by the National Park Service in 1972, has been on site since it was erected in the 1880s. As a towering symbol of the countryside, this tall yellow pine windmill is located next to the N.T. Stubbs well house and the water tank. A flowering wheel painted red and green caps the pyramidal form. The well below is capped, covered by heavy limestone slabs in which the pump shaft penetrates down to the well.

*The Water Tank (HB-79, LCS 065381)*

The water tank is an early 1970s (likely between 1972 and 1973) reconstruction of a water tank likely built between 1872 and 1882 that occupied the property when James Polk Johnson lived on the acreage. Intended to add to the historic scene at the Johnson Settlement Area, the reconstruction is a cypress water tank on four wooden posts and sits on a platform of rough boards. The structure, at approximately 12 feet high, is

attached to the windmill with a water pipe and is used to store water. The tank itself is composed of cypress wood and is held together by six steel tension rings. Its cylindrical shape tapers toward the top.

The water tank is considered eligible under Criteria Consideration E as an acceptable reconstruction.

*Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Visitor Center (formerly the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Hospital) (HB-100, LCS 065382)*

Built between 1968 and 1970 as the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Hospital, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Visitor Center is a one-story building with a partial basement. The architecture firm O'Connel and Probst designed the building for the Pedernales Hospital Authority, who were the original owners. The 25,700 square foot building is partially excavated into the hillside on the sloping site. The foundation system consists of 10-inch concrete basement perimeter walls with concrete columns and spandrel beams. The parapeted roof is constructed of standing-seam galvanized iron over cement fiberboard decking. From 1970-1985 the building housed a hospital, nursing home, doctor's and dentist's offices. In 1985 the hospital portion closed. In 1988 the remaining occupants vacated the building. In 1990 the property was acquired by the National Park Service for use as a Visitor Center and Headquarters for the park. The building is eligible under Criteria Consideration G.

*Fences, Pens, and Corrals*

The fences, pens, and corrals at the Johnson Settlement Area are important interpretive structures and significant in organizing the property to convey the historic ranching activities of the area. They represent a significant part of National Park Service efforts to plan, manage, and interpret the Johnson Settlement Area and are also employed to demarcate the boundaries of the property. Circulation throughout the Settlement Area is influenced by the presence of pens and corrals that also maintain horses and longhorns.

The fences, pens, and corrals were constructed between 1970 and 1972, with additional maintenance completed in the early 1980s. According to the “Johnson Settlement Fencing and Pasture Management Report” from 2001, there were no official plans and thus the fences, pens, and corrals constructed by Bobby Flickinger and his crew are in styles and locations that were based on very little information about pre-existing fencing. The crew used their best guesses and copied styles that were present in the area during frontier times. Pens and corrals, including a round pen for horse training, composed of cedar rail dominate the northern part of the Johnson Settlement Area and currently house livestock. There are also numerous pens on the eastern side of Back Forty Road to the south of the cluster of historic buildings and structures. A fence stretching north from the Exhibit/Event Center divides the eastern area undergoing native prairie restoration from the western area with the restored and reconstructed buildings. Fences are generally cedar rail fences or three-strand barbed wire, which was common around the time of Bruckner’s death. The fences, pens, and corrals are central in conveying the historic land use and were constructed within the period of significance.

#### *Chicken House Exhibit (HB-15, LCS 005719)*

The chicken house is a lean-to shed approximately 8 feet in height that was built by the National Park Service as a living history exhibit. It is of simple 2x4 construction sheathed in a weathered board and batten wall. Cedar shingles cap the roof. The east elevation has a shuttered window and a wood plank door. The small chicken house sits independently about 100 feet west of the Johnson Cabin and south of the Bruckner barn. There are currently no chickens in residence. It was likely built between 1972 and 1973. Historically, there was no chicken house on the property.

#### *Stone Wall*

There is a stone wall adjacent to the James Polk Johnson barn that was constructed by the National Park Service from 6,000 tons of rock moved to the site from an existing stone wall in Blanco County in the early 1970s.

*The Education Center, or the George T. Bryan House, or Taylor House (HB-99, LCS 06539) and associated sheds*

Built in 1905, the Education Center is located on the west side of Nugent Avenue and just to the east of Town Creek before crossing the footbridge into the Settlement Area. The building has undergone cosmetic changes although the original configuration remains. George Bryan was one of Johnson City's prominent merchants, and his house reflects his important social standing in the community. The exterior finish of the one-story structure is shingles over the original white clapboarding. The intersecting gable roofs of the L-shaped building are finished with V-channel metal sheets. The front elevation is symmetrical. Paired double-hung windows flank the central front door. A small hip-roofed porch shelters the front entrance. A stucco-on-metal lathe skirting camouflages the pier foundation. On the interior, parlors flank the central entrance hall. The dates of the interior changes, the porch enclosure, and the siding are not known, although they are estimated to have occurred during the 1920s. There are two small sheds used for maintenance storage south of the house on the other side of the footpath and one small shed to the northwest of the house.

Today, the Education Center is used for teacher workshops, educator meetings, and park education programs.

*The Johnson Settlement Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45)*

Built in 1973 this is a large administrative structure that serves as a prelude to the Johnson Settlement Area. The large two-story Exhibit/Event Center is characteristic of Texas breezeway architecture and has a concrete foundation, random ashlar-stone walls, tile floors, wood-beamed ceilings, and a cedar shake roof.

The Exhibit/Event Center is approached prior to entering the semi-circle of historic structures and serves as a comfort station in addition to housing exhibits that interpret frontier life, thus serving as an introduction to the historic area. There is a picnic

area immediately east of the building and other seating available in and around the building.

*The Johnson Settlement “Back 40” Wagon Storage Building (BLDG-49)*

Constructed in 1974 by the National Park Service, this is a large single-wall, board-and-batten building of pole construction located at the southernmost part of the Johnson Settlement Area. The building has board-and-batten siding and a corrugated metal roof and is used for storage. The shed was originally used to store the wagons that brought visitors to the Exhibit/Event Center. This building is also listed as BLDG - 55.

Although not physically constructed during the period of significance, this building was planned during the early 1970s at a time when President Johnson was still alive and therefore, is contributing.

*The Johnson Settlement “Back 40” Wagon Storage Building (BLDG-47)*

Similar to the other wagon storage building in the area, BLDG-47 was also constructed in 1974 by the National Park Service. It is a single-wall, board-and-batten building of pole construction with a corrugated metal roof. It is located at the southernmost part of the Johnson Settlement Area in the Back 40 Area and is used for storage. The building was originally used to store the wagons that brought visitors to the Exhibit/Event Center.

Plans for the building were drafted in the early 1970s, though the building wasn't constructed until 1974. As a result of those early plans, the building is contributing despite its construction date.

*The Johnson Settlement “Back 40” Feed Storage Building (BLDG-56)*

Constructed in 1974, this is a National Park Service administrative structure. It is of frame construction, board-and-batten siding with a corrugated metal roof. The building houses animal feed and tack necessary as part of the living history exhibits at the park.

Originally built as a temporary structure, the building is located at the southernmost part of the Johnson Settlement Area in the Back 40 Area.

Although not physically constructed during the period of significance, this building was planned during the early 1970s at a time when President Johnson was still alive and therefore, is contributing.

#### *The Sprayer Storage Building (BLDG-52)*

Constructed in 1977, the Sprayer Storage Building is a small shed with pole construction, board-and-batten siding, and a corrugated metal roof. It is located south of the Bruckner barn and the cluster of historic buildings, immediately to the east of Back Forty Road. It abuts a corral composed of a cedar rails, and is the only structure in this part of the property.

#### *Various sheds*

Some sheds have been added to the property for management and storage purposes. One shed is located in the middle of the dirt loop road where the volunteer recreational vehicles are parked in the “Back 40” Area. It contains laundry facilities for the volunteers. Another shed has been built to the east of to the “Back 40” Wagon Storage Building (BLDG-49).

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Johnson Log Cabin (HB-7)  
Johnson Log Cabin Smokehouse (HB-8)  
Johnson Log Cabin Privy (HB-9)  
Johnson Log Cabin Well (HB-007.A)  
John Bruckner Barn (HB-10)  
James Polk Johnson Barn (HB-11)  
N.T. Stubbs Well House (HB-12)  
Eclipse Windmill (HB-78)  
Water Tank (HB-79)  
Fences, Pens, and Corrals  
The Education Center, or George T. Bryan House (HB-99) and associated garden sheds

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Visitor Center (formerly the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial Hospital) (HB-100)

Stone wall adjacent to the James Polk Johnson barn

Chicken House (BLDG-15)

Johnson Settlement Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45)

Johnson Settlement “Back 40” Storage Building (BLDG-49)

Johnson Settlement “Back 40” Storage Building (BLDG-47)

Johnson Settlement “Back 40” Tack and Feed Storage Building (BLDG-56)

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Sprayer Storage Building

Various recently constructed sheds

#### MISSING FEATURES:

Bush corral and outbuildings from Provost era

Two-story framed house near the James Polk Johnson barn (burned 1918)

Blacksmith Shop



Figure 27: Restored windmill (HB-78), reconstructed water tank (HB-79), and restored N.T. Stubbs well house (HB-12), facing north (Source: Author).





Figure 28: Restored James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), facing southwest (Source: Author).



Figure 29: Restored Johnson log cabin (HB-7), facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 30: Restored Johnson log cabin (HB-7), facing southeast (Source: Author).



Figure 31: Restored Bruckner barn (HB-10), facing southeast (Source: Author).





Figure 32: Reconstructed Johnson privy (HB-9), facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 33: Reconstructed Johnson smokehouse (HB-8), facing north (Source: Author).





Figure 34: Johnson Settlement Area Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45), facing west  
(Source: Author).



Figure 35: Reconstructed rock wall adjacent to the James Polk Johnson barn, facing southwest  
(Source: Author).



Figure 36: The Education Center, or the George T. Bryan House (HB-99), located on the east side of Town Creek, facing northwest (Source: Author).



Figure 37: “Back 40” tack and feed storage building (BLDG-56), facing north (Source: Author).





Figure 38: “Back 40” area maintenance building (BLDG-49), and small shed to the east, facing south (Source: Author).



Figure 39: Fences south of the cluster of reconstructed and restored buildings and structures, facing south (Source: Author).



Figure 40: Circular horse pen located near the northern boundary of the Johnson Settlement Area, facing northeast (Source: Author).

### ***3. Circulation***

Circulation through the Johnson Settlement Area serves an important role in framing and organizing the visitor experience.

The routes, materials, and general nature of the circulation features from the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century are unknown. They likely consisted of informal dirt paths connecting the various elements on the property together, such as from the log cabin (HB-7) to the Bruckner barn (HB-10) or from the log cabin to various corrals. There were likely other informal circulation routes that existed as a result of frequent use and necessity, such as perhaps to Town Creek.

Photographs from the early 1970s indicate that the National Park Service had established the dirt footpath nature trail around the cluster of restored and reconstructed buildings by 1972. When the Johnson Settlement Area opened to the public in 1974, the National Park Service Visitor Center was located on Elm Street in Johnson City, which created circulation routes extending into the site from that area. Also by this time, the

National Park Service had built a wagon road for wagon tours of the Settlement Area that diagonally crossed the eastern part of the property, from the northeast entrance at Elm Street to the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45). This wagon road was abandoned in 1986.

More recent changes to circulation patterns include alterations in pedestrian paths in 1992 and 1995 and the completion of the Visitor Center parking lot and paths in 1994 and 1997. Since the Visitor Center has changed locations, Ladybird Lane rather than Elm Street is now the main point of entry into the Johnson Settlement Area. However, the former entrance into the Settlement Area from Elm Street still exists and is still in use, though to a lesser degree.

Today, contemporary circulation routes have been designed by the National Park Service to move visitors through the landscape, around the open pasture, and in and around the historic buildings and structures in an organized fashion for maximum historic interpretation and minimal environmental disturbance.

Parking for the Johnson Settlement Area is both at the Visitor Center in Johnson City and at a small semi-circular dirt lot at the northwest corner of the property. Thus, there is minimal vehicular circulation anywhere at the Johnson Settlement Area. Extending south from Main Street, the major exception is Back Forty Road that connects Main Street to the “Back 40” Area. It is a one-lane gravel road that can also be accessed from a footpath to the west of the Bruckner barn (HB-10). The Back Forty Road leads south past the cluster of historic buildings and structures and further south past large pastures with a series of corrals on the eastern side that contain longhorns. It then leads to the “Back 40” area where the maintenance facilities are located.

Upon heading south into the “Back 40” area, the gravel road crosses Town Creek and then heads east and forms a loop around a grassy island that houses the “Back 40” maintenance buildings. A smaller teardrop shaped dirt loop road extends off the eastern tip of the Back 40 Road and leads to the Volunteers in Parks campground and recreational vehicle parking area for volunteers. There is another small dirt loop road that extends to the northeast from the campground loop which leads to a dump site.



Pedestrian circulation at the Johnson Settlement Area can be broadly divided into three areas: (1) The Visitor Center within Johnson City (2) The open pasture of tall grass prairie on the eastern side of the historic area, and (3) The cluster of historic buildings and structures on the western side of the historic area.

From the parking area at the Visitor Center (HB-100), the Johnson Settlement Area is accessed by city sidewalk heading west on Ladybird Lane. Crossing over to the west side of Nugent Avenue, the concrete sidewalk continues west. The concrete sidewalk has a northern spur that accesses the Education Center (HB-99), also known as the George T. Bryan House, while the main path that continues west becomes a dirt footpath that leads to Town Creek, a riparian corridor lined with a grove of trees. Upon crossing over the creek by footbridge, the dirt footpath enters into the open pastureland with tall prairie grasses.

Upon entering the tall-grass prairie pasture area, the footpath becomes a loop trail. This path, dating to the early 1970s, is very similar to its 1970s configuration, with minor alterations due to the ongoing native prairie restoration. The visitor can choose to either go left or right (south or north, respectively) as the path leads around the pastureland that dominates the entire eastern portion of the Johnson Settlement Area. To both the north and south the path is approximately 4 feet wide and initially mirrors Town Creek. To the west of the trail is the open pasture and to the east is a grove of trees.

Both the northbound and southbound paths eventually veer west in line with adjacent fences and trees. Both dirt paths continue west toward the area dominated by the cluster of historic buildings and structures navigating around the large pasture undergoing native prairie restoration. The width of the footpath generally fluctuates between 4 and 6 feet wide.

As the southern portion of the loop footpath heads west, it reaches the Johnson Settlement Area Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) and picnic area located west of the open prairie. The picnic area is located immediately east of the Exhibit/Event Center building that has a north-south orientation. The picnic area is located within a grassy circle and is surrounded by a wider dirt loop path that is intersected by the original

footpath. This wider dirt loop path surrounding the picnic area is a service road that connects the Exhibit/Event Center and picnic area to the northern part of the footpath adjacent to the pens and corrals that line the northern border of the Johnson Settlement Area. This north-south road and fence form a distinct divide between the tall grass prairie in the east and the short grass area with historic buildings and structures in the west.

At the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45), the footpath leads through the breezeway and accesses the exhibit halls and restrooms of the building. From here, the footpath winds further west away from the Exhibit/Event Center and south over Town Creek by way of a small footbridge to the Johnson log cabin (HB-7). Thereafter it winds west and north to the Bruckner barn (HB-10). The path approaches the eastern side of the barn and encircles both the south and north elevations of the barn and through its breezeway, inviting the visitor to view farm tools on display. Thereafter, the path heads north past the corrals that contain horses associated with the adjacent James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11). The barn cannot be entered but visitors can stray from the path and approach the pens that contain horses.

Past the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), the path heads north before veering east at the site of the windmill (HB-78), well house (HB-12), and water tank (HB-79). Immediately west of the location of the windmill, well house, and water tank there is path extension that leads north from the dirt footpath to Main Street. This path connects the loop footpath to a small semi-circular dirt parking area to the north that is adjacent to Main Street/Highway 290. In this parking area there is minimal landscaping and there are no formal designated parking spaces. Visitors can thus leave their automobiles right off of the main thoroughfare of Johnson City and walk down this path extension to the main loop footpath.

A cedar rail fence divides the semi-circular parking area from the Settlement Area extension path leading to the cluster of buildings. This fence can be opened and vehicles can access the aforementioned service road to the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) for official gatherings by driving along the northern part of the dirt path.

The dirt path heads east from the windmill (HB-78), water pump (HB-79), and well house (HB-12), and continues east just south of a series of pens and corrals that hold longhorns. The far sides of these corrals are the northern boundary of the Johnson Settlement Area and abut private property. Shortly thereafter the path intersects with the aforementioned wider north-south dirt service road that accesses the picnic area and Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) to the south.

Thereafter the path reenters the pasture area undergoing tall-grass prairie restoration and loops back around the exterior of the pasture near the property boundary. Toward the eastern side of the property, remnants of the original wagon road are visible and accessible from the footpath. Although it is somewhat overgrown, the dirt wagon road can be traced diagonally through the pasture from the northeast part of the property southwest to the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45).

Following the dirt path east, upon reaching Town Creek there is the option to follow the path through a metal gate to Elm Street and leave the Johnson Settlement Area. This was the original Johnson Settlement Area entrance and exit when the Visitor Center was located on Elm Street and Avenue G. The other option is to continue south on the dirt path to complete the loop and cross the footbridge over Town Creek back to Ladybird Lane.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

- Dirt pedestrian loop path
- Footbridges
- Back Forty Road
- Dirt loop road leading to volunteer campground
- Remnants of the original wagon road

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

- Johnson City sidewalks

#### UNDETERMINED FEATURES:

- Dirt road leading to dump site



Figure 41: Johnson City sidewalk becomes dirt footpath on the west side of Nugent Avenue before crossing Town Creek, with porch of the Education Center (HB-99) at far left, facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 42: Southern part of dirt loop footpath around tall prairie near the entrance to the Johnson Settlement Area, facing west (Source: Author).





Figure 43: North-south dirt access road dividing tall grass prairie on the east (right) from short grass area with historic buildings and structures to the west (left), with row of private property located between NPS property line and Main Street visible to the north, facing north (Source: Author).



Figure 44: Intersection of north-south dirt access road from the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) with the east-west dirt footpath, facing south (Source: Author).



Figure 45: Small footbridge over Town Creek, with south elevation of Johnson log cabin (HB-7) visible in background, facing west (Source: Author).



Figure 46: Dirt loop footpath meandering through the northern section of the pasture undergoing restoration with private property located between NPS property and Main Street visible in the background, facing north (Source: Author).





Figure 47: Remnants of the original wagon road as seen from the main dirt footpath around the pasture, facing southwest (Source: Author).



Figure 48: Semi-circular parking area in northwest part of the property, located immediately off of Main Street, facing south (Source: Author).



Figure 49: Semi-circular parking area immediately off of Main Street, facing west (Source: Author).



Figure 50: Back Forty Road, facing south (Source: Author).





Figure 51: Volunteers in Parks campground dirt loop road off of Back Forty Road, facing east (Source: Author).



Figure 52: Dirt loop road extending northeast from the Volunteers in Parks campground loop leading to dump site in “Back 40” Area, facing northeast (Source: Author).

#### ***4. Cluster Arrangement***

Several distinct yet interrelated parts characterize the cluster arrangement and spatial organization of the Johnson Settlement Area. The cluster arrangement of the landscape was shaped gradually as buildings and structures were added to the property throughout the period of significance.

The Johnson Settlement Area historically was a ranching and farming complex, which is reflected in the cluster arrangement of the buildings, structures, fences, and corrals that were influenced by the natural systems and features of the landscape. Over time buildings and structures were constructed within a concentrated area, creating a half-circle of buildings that responded to the needs of the changing agricultural and farming landscape.

Today, the close relationship between the buildings is characteristic of a working agricultural landscape. All buildings are all within immediate visual range and walking distance from one another. Fences and corrals add to the historic nature of the scene and also create enclosed spaces. The numerous fences, pens, and corrals are generally clustered on the northern edges of the property, as well as on the western side next to the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11). All buildings are accessed from the dirt loop footpath that connects the buildings and structures to the Visitor Center to the east. In some instances, rows of trees are immediately south of the footpath creating a visual break between areas. The rows of trees around the Settlement Area influence the views and vistas and the way the landscape is experienced. The area is also characterized by cut grass to the east of the buildings that extends to the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45). Nearby is a picnic area. Further east, north-south dirt access road separates the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) and a 15-acre area undergoing native prairie restoration. This prairie restoration area is primarily characterized by tall grasses, a few scattered trees, and open views into and around the area. Other notable features include benches, fences, and a loop footpath.

During the early 1970s the National Park Service converted the property into an historic and interpretive landscape and thus added the necessary maintenance and management facilities to the Johnson Settlement Area. This is reflected in the cluster arrangement of the “Back 40” Area where the maintenance facilities are located within close range of the restored and reconstructed buildings, but are out of view from visitors. The maintenance buildings of the “Back 40” Area are clustered on a grassy island accessed from and encircled by Back Forty Road. Also, the Volunteers in Parks campground is located in the “Back 40” Area. The Volunteers in Parks campground is a loop dirt road with four concrete pads suitable for RV parking. The “Back 40” Area cluster is out of visual range from the historic buildings of the property and key in the management and maintenance of the interpretive landscape.

There is also an associated Visitor Center (HB-100) cluster to the east in Johnson City, which is integrated into the grid system of the town. The Visitor Center is physically and visually separated from the open pastures of the Johnson Settlement Area by Town Creek and the dense cluster of trees growing along its banks. In addition to the Visitor Center, the area also contains a parking lot, city sidewalks, and five memorial sites.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

- Clusters of pens and corrals
- Pastures
- Picnic Area
- Boundary fences
- Clusters of pastures
- Cluster of historic buildings and structures
- Clusters of circulation routes
- Cluster of Back 40 area buildings
- Cluster of Visitor Center features

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

N/A



Figure 53: Cluster of historic reconstructions and restorations with Johnson privy (HB-9) and smokehouse (HB-9), Johnson log cabin (HB-7), and the Bruckner barn (HB-11), from left to right, facing south (Source: Author).



Figure 54: Cluster of historic restorations and reconstructions with water tank (HB-79), windmill (HB-78), Bruckner barn (HB-10), and James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11) and fences, from left to right, facing south (Source: Author).



## ***5. Constructed Water Features***

Constructed water features at the Settlement Area are limited. The only known feature is a well of coursed limestone, approximately 18 feet deep and 4 feet wide, which is located to the immediate southeast of the Johnson cabin and was reported by Fred Bruckner to have been dug by the Johnsons. It is currently covered over.

### **CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:**

Johnson log cabin well (HB-007.A; LCS ID: 258479)

### **NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:**

N/A



Figure 55: Historic water well (HB-7.A) located southeast of the Johnson log cabin, facing northwest (Source: Author).



Figure 56: Historic water well (HB-7.A) located southeast of the Johnson log cabin (HB-7) with pen and smokehouse (HB-8) in background, facing northeast (Source: Author).

## ***6. Cultural Traditions***

The Johnson Settlement Area is interpreted and preserved by the National Park Service to communicate the cultural traditions associated with frontier living and the development of working agricultural landscapes of central Texas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As the home and headquarters of former president Lyndon B. Johnson's paternal grandparents' cattle ranching operation, the Johnson Settlement Area is particularly associated with the frontier heritage of former president Lyndon B. Johnson, a significant figure in American politics.

These agricultural traditions are part of the westward expansion of the United States as settlers moved into the central Texas frontier and set up cattle ranches in the vast territory. These migrations to central Texas and cattle drives up the Chisholm Trail to Kansas in turn affected the development of the economy and cultures of the region. These agricultural practices distinctly influenced the development of the land use and in

turn the landscape. Thus, the numerous reconstructed fences, pens, and corrals, and livestock throughout the property contribute in interpreting the associated cultural traditions.

The Johnsons were among the first individuals to settle in the area, eventually setting up their ranching operations south of the Pedernales River. The Johnson Settlement Area interprets cultural traditions associated with the domestic and working aspects of frontier life. This is accomplished through the presence of related artifacts that are on display in the Johnson cabin in addition to through the display of farm tools at the Bruckner barn. Additionally, horses and longhorn cattle are showcased at the property, continuing the tradition of livestock grazing within the region.

Cultural traditions can also be discerned through the associated vernacular architectural styles at the Settlement Area, such as the Texas dogtrot log cabin and barns. These architectural forms are representative of a large-scale working agricultural landscape, and are associated with particular cultural groups. Again, the cultural traditions at the Settlement Area represent the agricultural traditions of ranching and farming communities, in addition to traditions associated with frontier living.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Continued presence of cattle and horses in the landscape  
Division of land by fences and corrals  
Traditional use of open range pasture  
Buildings and structures representative of a large-scale working agricultural landscape

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

N/A



Figure 57: A longhorn resting in one of the several corrals located to the east of Back Forty Road, facing southeast (Source: Author).



Figure 58: The N.T. Stubbs well house (HB-12), water tank (HB-79), and windmill (HB-78), facing southeast (Source: Author).





Figure 59: The Johnson log cabin (HB-7) that served as the residence on the homesteading site, facing southwest (Source: Author).

## ***7. Land Use***

The Johnson Settlement Area has been thoroughly influenced by its land uses. The land has been used as a homestead and working agricultural landscape, as the headquarters of Lyndon Johnson's grandparents ranching operation in the 1860s, in addition to later use as a farming site in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 1970s, the landscape has been used as an historic interpretive site managed by the National Park Service. These principal activities on the land have formed, shaped, and organized the landscape of the Johnson Settlement Area throughout its period of significance.

Upon the arrival of Anglo settlers, the open range of central Texas was converted into a working landscape for the grazing of livestock with accompanying infrastructural needs such as widespread fences and corrals for holding the animals. In order to sustain ranching activities, various buildings and structures were constructed over time, including a dwelling for the owners of the ranch to reside in the remote setting. Other structures necessary for the execution of ranching operations such as barns were also added.

The land uses have in turn profoundly influenced the vegetation, the types of buildings and structures, cultural traditions, overall spatial organization, and small-scale features found throughout the property. The landscape was shaped to accommodate human settlement in a remote frontier environment, which entailed harnessing the land.

Only a portion of the original range has been preserved and the growth of Johnson City around the Settlement Area has affected the historically rural setting. Today, the National Park Service manages the property as an interpretive historic landscape that communicates the history and culture of the working frontier. While the historic and original land uses are no longer in operation, their history and influence are preserved through the Johnson Settlement Area that President Johnson was involved with acquiring and planning. The historic land uses are made visible through the interpretation of the property, with an emphasis on the remaining buildings and structures.

The National Park Service also uses the land for administrative purposes in order to manage the property. The Visitor Center cluster and the “Back 40” Area that contains maintenance facilities are essential in the administration of the Johnson Settlement Area as an interpretive site. The Visitor Center is in Johnson City, separate from the historic area, and integrated into the grid of the city. The “Back 40” Area is located near the southern boundary of the property, out of visual range from the historic section, demonstrating a division of land uses by the National Park Service in the management of the Johnson Settlement Area.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Agricultural land use  
Interpretive and recreational land use  
National Park Service administrative use

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

N/A



Figure 60: A longhorn grazing in a corral, facing north (Source: Author).



Figure 61: Pens and corrals in the northern region of the Johnson Settlement Area with Johnson City in background, facing northwest (Source: Author).



Figure 62: The James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11) and adjacent corral, facing north  
(Source: Author).

### ***8. Natural Systems and Features***

As an historic interpretive agricultural landscape, the natural systems and features of the Johnson Settlement Area are central in the development and history of the property. Historically, the site was a tall grass prairie and oak savannah. This extensive tall grass prairie found by settlers upon arrival in central Texas was considered ideal for cattle grazing.

Town Creek runs northeast through the Settlement Area and, while not a dominant feature, access to water was undoubtedly beneficial for the settlers and their activities. Town Creek was and is a riparian corridor on the property that supports various types of vegetation while providing food and a habitat for local species.

Today, a flat open pasture dominates the physical space of the Johnson Settlement Area that is dotted with other features such as buildings and structures. The grasslands have been divided into eight pastures for management purposes that have different conservation and restoration plans according to their use, many of which have been



undergoing restoration of native grasses and plants since the 1970s. Much of the vegetation, as part of the natural systems, has been compromised since the early ranching days and restoring the vegetation is a major area of focus in ongoing efforts to preserve the landscape.

Within the Settlement Area property are tall grass prairies that are undergoing restoration, short grasses around the historic buildings and structures, and pastures maintained for grazing that run along the east side of Back Forty Road. As noted above, Town Creek runs through the property and is a riparian corridor.

Preserving the natural systems and features has been a major effort in National Park Service Management of the Johnson Settlement Area.

For additional information, see Vegetation and Land Use.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Town Creek  
Native vegetation  
Tall grass prairie  
Flat topography

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Non-native vegetation since the 1970s



Figure 63: Flat open grassy area amidst historic buildings and structures with well house and cedar rail fences visible, facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 64: Town Creek from the footbridge west of Nugent Avenue crossing into Johnson Settlement Area, facing north (Source: Author).

## ***9. Small Scale Features***

There are numerous small-scale features throughout the Johnson Settlement Area, some of which add to the historic scene, while others serve visitor and utilitarian functions.

Historically, it can be assumed that the small-scale features at the property reflected articles necessary to sustain daily life on the frontier. There were likely tools, such as farm utensils, wagons, and other materials and items necessary for maintaining a large-scale working agricultural landscape. There were also likely items and furnishings that reflected domestic life, such as those required for cooking, sewing, cleaning, and eating.

Currently, there are numerous small-scale features on display. Within the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), visible through the windows and doors that are currently covered with plexiglass, are items that communicate frontier domestic life, such as beds, a sewing machine, books, cookware. Around the log cabin are numerous barrels, wooden seating, and firewood.

In the open shed on the southern side of the Bruckner barn (HB-10), farming implements and a carriage are on display, contributing to the historic scene. There are also two hitching posts to which horses could be tethered.

The National Park Service has added numerous modern small-scale features for visitor convenience such as lights, utilities, and trash receptacles. There are benches placed throughout the Settlement Area including around the dirt footpath around the pasture. There is a picnic area with related amenities on the eastern side of the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45).

Numerous signs have been added to the Johnson Settlement Area for wayside exhibits, interpretive and directional signs, and notices regarding appropriate behavior on the site particularly toward the livestock. There is also a Texas historic marker sign at the north parking area immediately off of Main Street.

A native grasses demonstration with extensive signage has been installed just east of the corrals near the northern boundary of the property. These small demonstration plots are lined with limestone and each has an interpretive sign with an image and text containing both common and Latin names of plant species.

In the “Back 40” Area there are numerous pieces of equipment used for maintenance of the property. There is feed for livestock, plows, and trailers in addition to other tools. In the Volunteers in Parks campground there are picnic tables, concrete slabs, and recycling bins.

Other small-scale features include a fire ring, flagpole at the Visitor Center, and hoses and spigots for watering horses.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Farm tools on display at the Bruckner Barn  
Carriage on display at the Bruckner Barn

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Benches  
Utilities  
Picnic tables  
Trash receptacles  
Light fixtures  
Wayside exhibits  
Signage  
Limestone rocks at native grasses demonstration garden  
Modern maintenance equipment, including trailers and tractors, in “Back 40” Area  
Concrete slabs and recycling bins in Volunteers in Parks campground  
Fire ring  
Visitor Center flagpole  
Hoses and spigots for watering horses

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING / COMPATIBLE FEATURES:

Barrels, wooden seating, and firewood at Johnson log cabin  
Wooden benches and chairs around historic buildings  
Hitching posts



## FEATURES MANAGED AS A CULTURAL RESOURCE:

Texas historic marker sign

Stone memorials at the Visitor Center



Figure 65: Bench along the dirt footpath heading east towards Town Creek, with Johnson City visible in background, facing east (Source: Author).



Figure 66: Picnic tables with trash receptacles, east of the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45), facing southwest (Source: Author).



Figure 67: Warning sign regarding grazing longhorns outside of corrals located south of the cluster of restored and reconstructed buildings, facing south (Source: Author).



Figure 68: Directional signage located in the northern parking area off of Main Street, facing south (Source: Author).





Figure 69: An example of a wayside interpretive sign at the Johnson Settlement Area, facing west (Source: Author).

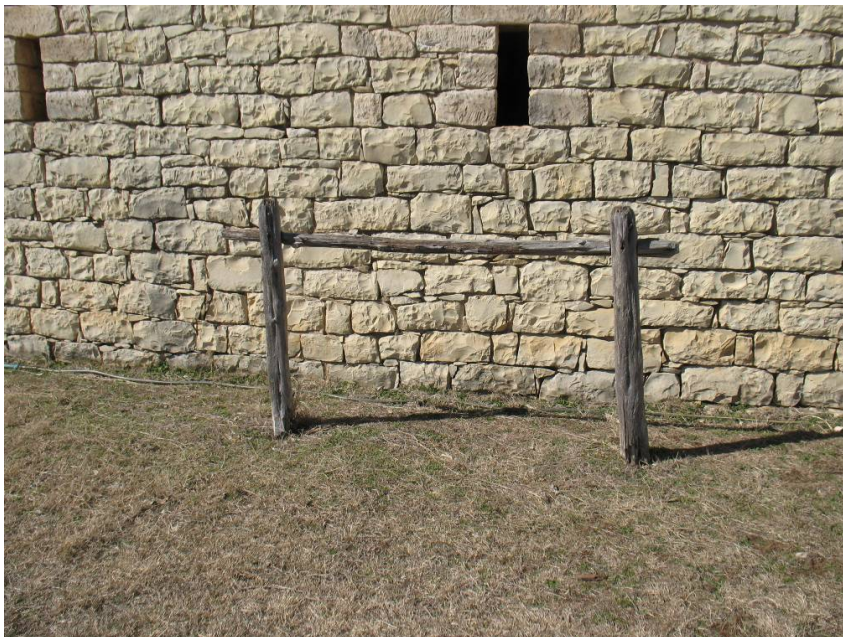


Figure 70: Post to tether a horse to outside the eastern elevation of the James Polk Johnson barn (HB-11), facing west (Source: Author).



Figure 71: Farm tools on display outside of the southern elevation of the Bruckner barn (HB-10), facing west (Source: Author).



Figure 72: Carriage on display outside of the southern elevation of the Bruckner barn (HB-10), facing northeast (Source: Author).





Figure 73: Utilities in the “Back 40” Area, facing west (Source: Author).

### ***10. Spatial Organization***

See Cluster Arrangement and Circulation.

### ***11. Topography***

The topography of the Johnson Settlement Area is flat with perhaps only a slight slope in some areas. There are few variations in the landscape and virtually no changes have been made to the historic ground plane. The only notable changes is that the National Park Service has added a few drainage ditches to the landscape, only slightly altering the topography.

#### **CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:**

Flat, gently sloping topography

#### **NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:**

Small-scale changes in topography for drainage ditches



Figure 74: Dirt footpath through the tall grass prairie, facing east (Source: Author).



Figure 75: Flat topography as viewed from Back Forty Road with Bruckner barn (HB-10) visible, facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 76: View across tall grass pasture with the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) in the background (Source: Author).

## ***12. Vegetation***

The vegetation at the Johnson Settlement Area has undergone many changes throughout its history due to the nature of the working landscape and interventions as an interpretive landscape managed by the National Park Service.

Conclusions about the plants that grew in the Johnson Settlement Area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century can be drawn from what is known generally about the regional vegetation and land uses during that time. The historic vegetation in this area is believed to have been a tall grass prairie and oak savannah. The overstory shaded 10 to 15 percent of the area and consisted primarily of live oak and post oak, while the understory was dominated by little bluestem, and in lesser amounts indiagrass, big bluestem, Canada wildrye, vine-mesquite, tall dropseed, and feathery bluestems.

Before the arrival of settlers, central Texas is believed to have been an open range of tall grasses that grew for miles. Consequent overgrazing of livestock by homesteaders quickly exhausted and diminished this resource. The first fences in the region were built



in 1853, composed of cedar rails or rocks, which led to the enclosure of livestock in concentrated areas. No methods of rotation were used and overstocking occurred without knowledge of its effects on the vegetation. Thus the forage grasses were killed out by overuse with numerous other consequences such as soil erosion and runoff.

Due to the compromised nature of the historic vegetation over the years and its central role in interpreting the site, the vegetation at the Johnson Settlement Area has been a major issue in management efforts by the National Park Service. As such several conservation plans, vegetation inventories and reports, and analyses of how to accomplish successful prairie restoration have been executed since the National Park Service acquired the property.

A pecan grove was planted during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and has since been thinned by the National Park Service after obtaining the property. The former pecan orchard is representative of an altered mesic grassland on the Edwards Plateau and thus the National Park Service decided to systematically remove it to restore the pre-settlement appearance. Cedar also became a problem within the area around the 1930s.

By 1976 a Native Grasses program was established at the Johnson Settlement Area and it was recommended that all seeded areas be deferred from livestock grazing for two growing seasons until plants were established. Most areas were older fields in poor to fair soil condition due to overuse. It was deemed necessary to control weedy plants for several years to insure seedling survival.

By 1978 the National Park Service continued to thin the pecan orchard to a less dense makeup and overseeded the ground plane with a mixture of native grasses (Native Prairie Restoration and Monitoring on the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Johnson City, Texas).

By 1980, it was reported that 20-30% of total vegetation was native tall grass prairie species. The remainder of the vegetation in the area was comprised of invasive species or pioneer plants (Soil Conservation Service Assessment).

In 1986 an historic vegetation study was conducted for the entire park that concluded, "The cypress trees that grow along a drainage through and adjacent to the site

are of special interest and value both historically and environmentally. Because of its value for timber, much of the cypress in the region has been severely cut for building and construction. The large live oaks on the property have not been dated, and it is not known whether any of them were in place during the historic period” (Carls and Gardner).

Additionally alterations in the vegetation occurred in 1994 with improvements at the Visitor Center. Some trees (species unknown) were removed within the Johnson Settlement Area and around the Visitor Center area. In their place, large spreading oak trees, native and ornamental shrubs, ivy ground cover, and lawn grass areas were planted around the Visitor Center. Several young live oaks were also planted at the Johnson Settlement Area.

In 1997, a vegetation inventory was conducted by the University of Texas at Austin with the aim of returning the vegetation composition within the Settlement Area to the pre-Settlement appearance. The project objectives included: “reestablishing native late-successional grasses and forbs into the area, reducing the abundance and attempting to eliminate Johnsongrass and KR Bluestem, assessing the woody plant species on site and developing a plan to reduce unwanted species, and developing a vegetation monitoring system to evaluate the rate and direction of vegetation change on the site” (Native Prairie Restoration and Monitoring on the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, Johnson City, Texas). The same assessment found that reseeding attempts had been largely unsuccessful due to drought but that Johnsongrass had been substantially reduced. Subsequently, a vegetation monitoring system was developed for the management of the property.

By 1999, further prairie restoration was undertaken in the 15 acres near the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45), in the eastern part of the property (LBJ National Historical Park Archives). Prairie restoration continues today throughout the Settlement Area with multiple monitoring and reporting efforts.

At an unknown time, though likely within the last decade, a native plant demonstration walk was constructed in the northern part of the property, north of the dirt footpath and directly north of the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45). Individual plots have

examples of native plants and grasses with small interpretive signs with each plant's common and Latin names.

Today, the National Park Service intends to keep the majority of the Johnson Settlement Area as a natural area with native plants. The park's target floral composition, typical of a Edwards Plateau clay-loam range site, is predominantly native mixed-grass prairie species comprising little bluestem (50%), Indiangrass (10%), big bluestem (5%), other grasses (50%), with annual and perennial wildflowers (5%) that are able to coexist with tall grass species such as Maximilian sunflower, Engelmann daisy, and bundleflower.

The area undergoing restoration is currently composed of a mix of tall grasses approximately 2.5 to 3 feet tall. There is now a reasonable mix of mid-successional grasses and forbs, though scattered patches of exotic species are also present. The western side where the historic buildings and structures are located has mowed short grass. To the south along the eastern side of Back Forty Road are multiple pastures used for livestock grazing by National Park Service for longhorns, mules, and horses. The major native tree species throughout the property consist of live oak, post oak, cedar elm, bald cypress, and pecan. Exotic invasive species include Chinaberry, Johnsongrass, KR bluestem, Chinese tallow, and mesquite.

As the Johnson Settlement Area is dominated by pasturelands and is an interpretive historic agricultural site, the vegetation is important in portraying the nature of the frontier landscape.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Native prairie grasses (green sprangletop, sidegoats grama, little bluestem, big bluestem, Indiangrass)

Native perennial wildflowers purple coneflower, Illinois bundleflower, black-eyed Susan, green thread, purple prairie clover, and white prairie clover)

Live oak

Post oak

Cedar elm

Bald cypress

Pecan trees

NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Native plants demonstration walk

Exotic / invasive species (Chinaberry, Johnsongrass, KR bluestem, Chinese tallow, mesquite)



Figure 77: Live Oak immediately southwest of the Johnson log cabin (HB-7), facing southeast (Source: Author).



Figure 78: Short mowed grass dominates the area with historic buildings and structures, facing east (Source: Author).



Figure 79: Open area around historic buildings and structures with Johnson privy (HB-9) visible at far right, facing southeast (Source: Author).





Figure 80: Tall grass pasture undergoing native prairie restoration that encompasses the eastern part of the Johnson Settlement Area with Johnson City in background, facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 81: Pastures east of Back Forty Road with grazing corrals in distance, facing northeast (Source: Author).



Figure 82: Pecan trees located to the northwest of the Exhibit/Event Center (BLDG-45) with fence in the background that divides the tall grass prairie from the region with reconstructed and restored buildings and structures, facing east (Source: Author).



Figure 83: Native plants demonstration walk slightly northeast of the cluster of buildings and structures, north of the dirt footpath, and immediately south of the northern property boundary with private property in the background, facing north (Source: Author).



### ***13. Views and Vistas***

The views and vistas at the Johnson Settlement Area have changed since Sam Johnson and Eliza Bunton lived in the area as a result of the growth of Johnson City around the property that was originally much larger. Historically, the area would have been a rural and remote settlement that likely would have had expansive views in all directions due to the flat topography with fewer and smaller trees. No other development would have been discernable.

Today, the Johnson Settlement Area administered by the National Park Service is much smaller than the original settlement and abuts private property. Immediately to the north and west of the Johnson Settlement Area are a handful private homes that face Main Street/Highway 290 and are within view. In addition to pens and corrals, modern conveniences, such as a gas station and water tank are within the views to the north from the property. Since the period of significance ends in 1973, at which point the city had developed substantially, all views, including those into the city, are contributing.

Views west also contain some private property in the distance, but are dominated by the cluster of reconstructed and restored buildings and structures.

The views looking east are primarily into the open pasturelands with scattered trees. This view is eventually terminated by a line of trees along Town Creek, bordering Nugent Avenue in Johnson City. One large industrial building is visible outside of the property line to the northeast.

From the core of the Johnson Settlement Area near the historic building cluster, the views to the south contain open pastures with occasional trees and corrals for the livestock. There is minimal development to the south thus creating a view over the flat pasture toward the “Back 40” Area, which itself is not visible due to the trees growing along Town Creek. The grazing pastures, often divided with pens and corrals, characterize the views to the south.

#### CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

Views west toward the buildings and structures across open pastureland

Views south toward the “Back 40” Area with pasture

Views east toward Town Creek across open pastureland

Views north toward Johnson City

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

N/A



Figure 84: View looking north from the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Author).



Figure 85: View looking west from the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Author).



Figure 86: View looking south from the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Author).



Figure 87: View looking east from the Johnson Settlement Area (Source: Author).

## Condition Assessment

## Condition Assessment

Good

Assessment Date

March 06, 2011

### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the Johnson Settlement Area can be considered good. Acting superintendent Gus Sanchez reported that the Johnson Settlement Area is in good condition and will further assess the property and provide a narrative.

### *Impacts to Inventory Unit*

Impact Type:

## Vegetation/Invasive Plants

External/Internal:

Internal

### Impact Explanatory Narrative:

The vegetation has been adversely affected by the historic practices of ranching and overstocking cattle on the land. Exotic and non-native species have been introduced over the years. The pastures are thus undergoing native prairie restoration to restore the area pastures to a late-successional, pre-European mixed-grass prairie with isolated native trees.

Impact Type:

## Erosion

External/Internal:

Internal

### Impact Explanatory Narrative:

Due to the overgrazing of cattle on the land during the historic period, the thin soil eroded over time with rains. The landscape has experienced erosion as is thus, as noted above, undergoing native prairie restoration.

Impact Type: Adjacent Lands

External/Internal: External

Impact Explanatory Narrative:

The Johnson Settlement Area is surrounded by Johnson City and thus development and modern conveniences are visible from within the historic site, altering the experience of a rural frontier setting.

## **Treatment**

Approved Landscape Treatment:	Restoration
Approved Landscape Treatment Completed:	No
Approved Landscape Treatment Document:	LBJ NHP Prairie Restoration Management Plan

### ***Approved Landscape Treatment Document***

Date:	August 2005
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#### **Treatment Explanatory Narrative:**

A Prairie Restoration Management Plan was developed for the park outlining restoration as an appropriate treatment option for the vegetation of the area.



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