

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ABRAM ANGLIN HOUSE

HABS No. TX-3491

- Location:** Now gone, the Abram Anglin House was located close to Groesbeck, in Limestone County, Texas. It stood about 100 yards beyond the eastern city limit of Groesbeck on State Street.
- Description:** The Abram Anglin House was singularly unusual for its time and place, or almost any other place. Unlike the prevailing Greek Revival, this building was pre-classical in concept and quite lacking in symmetrical arrangement. It appears to have been a persistence of the forms of late-medieval folk building that appeared in the early years of colonization on the eastern seaboard and endured there for more than two centuries, as recorded by Henry Chandler Forman, in his book The Architecture of the Old South: the Medieval Style 1585-1850 (Harvard University Press, 1948), pl. 145 and pp. 125, 155, 161, 181.
- The main block of the house, with a relatively steep pitch to its roof, was opened on two sides by a gallery at the first-floor level, terminating in a small room on each end. It had windows and doors giving into the central room, flanking which were lesser rooms of undetermined function. The large room, having a fireplace at one end, was presumably a large living room, rather like a hall in a medieval dwelling. It may have served also as the dining room, and it may have had beds in it as well. From the gallery an open stair, which may have had a dog-gate, led to the upper level, which was completely finished with boarding. There was, however, no door or vestibule. This room was completely open to the stair and the gallery below. It appears, therefore, that it was a bachelors dormitory--a garconniere. The exterior walls sheltered by the gallery were finished with smoothly-jointed boarding to appear seamless. Those walls were painted white. Otherwise the exterior walls of the main block of the house were finished with clapboards, painted an uncertain color, probably shade of white. The windows were fitted with six-over-six-lights double-hung sash. The underpinning was blocks of native stone.
- Condition:** The house was measured and drawn in 1942 by Ernest A. Connally. At that time it was vacant and in deteriorating condition. Several years previously the original kitchen, connected to the main house by a breezeway or dogtrot, had been pulled down. Fortunately, however, a photograph of 1932 makes it possible to draw a complete elevation of one side of the Anglin house, as it existed in complete form, with a high degree of accuracy. The surviving block of the house that was measured and drawn in 1942 was demolished in 1943.
- Significance:** The Anglin House was built in 1851 for Abram Anglin (1817-1875), a native of Tennessee who came to Texas in 1833, while it was still part of Mexico, with his father Elisha Anglin (1797-1874), a Virginian. They came with other pioneers of similar background and went down to modern Grimes County, where Stephen F. Austin's colony remained. In the summer of 1834, accompanied by James and Silas Parker, Elisha Anglin visited what is now Limestone County in the Sterling Robertson Colony and located a claim that included the site of the present town of Groesbeck. The land grant was made February 28, 1835. The Mexican land grant typically contained a league of

land (4428 acres) for grazing and a labor (177 acres) for tillage. Abram Anglin served as a Ranger in Captain Seal's Company in the Texas Revolution, 1835-36. About 1840, his father built a permanent home of hewn logs on a spring branch about a mile and a half north of the present town of Groesbeck. It stood until 1920 or later. Thus it was the eldest son, Abram Anglin, who built the frame house of dimension timber on the Elisha Anglin survey.

Abraham Groesbeck, a director of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad Company (later the Texas and New Orleans Railroad) and the affiliated town-site company purchased 984 acres in the Elisha Anglin survey on August 25, 1869. The town was platted in the course of the next year and dedicated on February 20, 1871, under the name Groesbeeck. (In later years the U.S. Post Office changed the name to Groesbeck which was not accepted by the railroad). The plat of the new town on its east side came within about 100 yards of the Anglin House.

Prepared By: Ernest A. Connally, July 1998.

Principal informant in 1942 was Mrs. Beesie Anglin Gresham of Groesbeck. Published sources consulted were Hampton Steele, A History of Limestone County Texas 1833-1860, (Mexia, Texas 1925) and Ray A. Walter, A History of Limestone County, (Austin, Texas 1959).