

DUBLIN PLANTATION, MAIN HOUSE  
3135 Cottonwood Creek Road  
Kingsbury  
Guadalupe County  
Texas

HABS TX-304-A  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### DUBLIN PLANTATION, MAIN HOUSE

HABS NO. TX-304-A

**Location:** 3135 Cottonwood Creek, Kingsbury, Guadalupe County, Texas.

USGS Kingsbury, Texas Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: Zone 14, North 3286347 East 617577.

**Significance:** The Main House of George Francis on the Dublin Plantation, erected in 1849, is historically significant because of the double dog trot style of the home's construction, the plantation's proximity to the original San Antonio-Bastrop mail route on Yorks Crossing, and the influence of the Francis family in Guadalupe County. The Dublin Plantation was originally a thousand-acre cotton plantation operated by family members and paid laborers. The Dublin Plantation remains in the Francis family to this day, though portions of the land have been sold over time. The George Francis Home was originally constructed in the dog-trot style common in southern frontier construction, and its use of two dog trots, rather than one, makes the structure distinctive. Later renovations enclosed the two breezeways, creating interior transitional spaces between rooms. Deep overhangs and large porches wrap around much of the house, echoing the architecture of the Francis family's previous home, Alabama. Many of the house's inhabitants played active roles in both the Texas Revolution and the Civil War, and the Francis family has played a prominent role in the surrounding communities for generations.

**Description:** The Dublin Plantation Main House is a single story residential structure constructed in the Southern vernacular dogtrot style. A dogtrot house, which can also be known as a breezeway house, dog-run, or possum-trot, is a style of house that was common throughout the Southeastern United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Essentially, a dogtrot is a breezeway, outdoor corridor, or hallway connecting interior spaces while allowing air circulation between the spaces.

The building shape reflects two intersecting dogtrots in floor plan, with a wraparound porch along the south and west facades. The main house consists of a standing seam metal roof and stands on a pier and beam foundation. Exterior siding is of wood plank siding and two brick masonry chimneys are located along the west and north facades.

The windows are double hung wood sash windows throughout the main house. The entry doors along the South façade are wood double doors with sidelights; the entry door along the East façade is a wood double door.

There are two entry doors along the North façade: leading into Gallery 2 is a wood double door with sidelights, and the entry door leading into the Kitchen is a wood door with wood metal screen door. The doors later placed along the original dogtrots have operable transom windows above.

Broken pediments along the four facades of the main house provide a distinguishing design detail.

The overall condition of the building materials and features is well maintained. There is clear evidence of repairs and maintenance throughout the exterior of the home. All repairs were executed using in-kind material and have not altered the integrity of the Main House.

Alterations that are evident with the passage of time are:

1. The enclosing of the double dogtrots, creating two interior galleries in these spaces
2. An addition of a lean-to with an intersecting roof, instead of the common saltbox lean-to, which now includes the Dining Room, Enclosed Porch, Kitchen, and Bathroom.

The Dublin Plantation Main House consists of two bedrooms and one bathroom, two interior galleries, a parlor, dining room and enclosed porch.

The building sits on the site rotated slightly off-axis approximately 33 degrees to the East of North.

The description should cover the physical characteristics of the building, past and present.

**History:**

The Dublin Plantation Main House was the home of George Francis and his wife Margaret Ann Rector. An Irish immigrant, Francis fought in the Texas Revolutionary War and became an influential settler of Guadalupe County. The Main House is a fine example of rural domestic Texas architecture, reflecting the Francis family's evolution. The house is comprised of two structures joined together. The house was constructed circa 1855 combining an earlier structure located on the plantation with a larger frame house. When the second half of the Main House was added in 1855, two breezeways were created and large shaded porches provided relief from the Texas heat.

The Dublin Plantation was once a 1,000-acre cotton plantation operated by Francis family members and paid laborers. Many of the home's inhabitants played active roles in both the Texas Revolution and the Civil

War, and the Francis family has played a prominent role in the surrounding communities for generations. The plantation was located along the original San Antonio-Bastrop mail route on York's crossing. The Dublin plantation remains in the Francis family to this day, though portions of the land have been sold over time.

George Francis was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1794 and died in Guadalupe County, Texas in 1884. He immigrated to the United States in the early 1820s, and settled in Alabama where he met and married Margaret Ann Rector (1804-1879) in 1823.<sup>1</sup>

George Francis traveled to Texas in 1835 to visit his wife's family and look for land. While there, he served in the Republic of Texas Army for five months from June through October 1836. Francis was granted land for his military service as evidenced by patents on file at the Texas General Land Office.<sup>2</sup>

George Francis returned to Alabama and another ten years elapsed before he was able to bring his family to Texas. His son, John preceded the rest of the family. On October 4, 1848, George and Margaret Ann Francis and seven of their children began their trip to Texas, arriving in Seguin two months later.<sup>3</sup>

The Francis family settled in Guadalupe County near the Caldwell County line on a land grant that was originally conveyed to Robert Smith, a member of the Green De Witt colony. The property was sold to a consortium including John C. McKean and W.A. Mathews, and in December 1851, George Francis purchased seven hundred and thirty five acres of the McKean/Mathews land.<sup>4</sup>

George Francis built a small log house on his property on west bank of York Creek. It is possible that he was already farming the land and built his house in about 1849 prior to purchasing the property. The house was located high above the creek. Archaeological investigations were begun in 2011 to locate the original house site and though some artifacts have been recovered, the location has not been determined with certainty.

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<sup>1</sup> Levi Brimmer Salmans, *History of the Descendants of John Jacob Rector* (Guanajuato, Mexico: Privately published, 1936), 173; Morgan County, Alabama, Marriage Records A:45.

<sup>2</sup> Texas State Library and Archives, Fannin Bounty, File 001258 ; Liberty Bounty, File 202.

<sup>3</sup> George M. Francis diary, photocopies in collection of Sidney J. Francis, II.

<sup>4</sup> Texas General Land Office, Survey 15, Class 5; Abstract 33, Patent 139, Gonzales County, Original Book A:8 and Guadalupe County Transcript, pages 2-3 and 532-533, February 4, 1838; Guadalupe County Deed Records, J:288-289, December 20, 1851, filed June 24, 1867.

The Dublin Plantation Main House was built ca. 1855. It was constructed in the dog-trot style common in southern frontier construction, and its use of two dog trots, rather than one, makes the structure distinctive. Later renovations enclosed the two breezeways, creating interior transitional spaces between rooms. Deep overhangs and large porches wrap around much of the house, echoing the architecture of the Francis family's previous home state of Alabama.

George Francis established his Texas farm when he was already in his middle fifties. By 1860 he had improved forty acres and maintained a herd of fifty milk cows together with one hundred and forty other cattle and forty pigs. The farm produced wheat, corn, hay, butter, and a small amount of cotton.<sup>5</sup>

It was in 1855 that George Francis began to subdivide his farm among his children, giving a one hundred acre tract fronting on York Creek to his son, Pendleton. Pendleton had just begun to improve his property when he left to fight in the Civil War in 1862. In 1860, he had twenty milk cows, other cattle, horses, and pigs, and like his father, grew wheat, cotton, corn and hay.<sup>6</sup>

All of George and Margaret Ann Francis' six sons served the Confederacy during the Civil War. Pendleton, George and Edward did not survive the war. Joseph and Wesley returned to farm in Guadalupe County and John established a farm in another part of the state. The Francis daughters, Amelia Ann and Arabella, both married and lived near their parents. George Francis gave his returning sons Joseph and Wesley farm tracts adjoining his own land. Joseph received three hundred and sixty three acres and Wesley received one hundred and eighty acres.<sup>7</sup>

By 1870, both Joseph and Wesley Francis were farming. Joseph's farm, which included horses, mules, oxen, milk cows, other cattle and pigs and various crops, was valued at \$1,600 while Wesley's holdings were only worth \$520. Their father, who was seventy-six years old in 1870, still maintained a herd of twenty-five milk cows on his remaining ninety one acre tract.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Non-Population Schedules, 1860, Guadalupe County, Texas.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; Guadalupe County Deed Records. E:794-795, January 24, 1855.

<sup>7</sup> Guadalupe County Deed Records K:91-92, December 23, 1868; K: 207-208, May 11. 1869.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Non-Population Schedules, 1870, Guadalupe County, Texas.

Wesley Francis only farmed for a short time, and in 1876, sold the majority of his land to Joseph. Together with his previous holdings, Joseph Francis then controlled 523 acres of his father's original 735 acre tract. It was about 1876 when George and Margaret Ann Francis left their farm to live with their daughter, Arabella. Margaret Ann Francis died in 1879 and George in 1884.<sup>9</sup>

Joseph Francis continued to live and farm at Dublin Plantation at least until the early 1900s. By 1880, he maintained a dairy herd, horses, pigs and chickens, produced butter, and grew corn. Like his father, as Joseph Francis grew older, he divided his property among his sons, Edward, Sidney J. (S.J.) and William. William and Joseph farmed and S.J. Francis became a successful doctor in Luling. Dr. Francis built a house for his father in nearby Prairie Lea and Joseph is thought to have moved there sometime prior to 1910. Joseph was enumerated in 1910 living in Prairie Lea. William and his family were also living with Joseph. Edward Francis remained at Dublin Plantation.<sup>10</sup>

In 1920, at the age of eighty four years old, Joseph Francis listed his profession on the census as "retired farmer." His son, William, with whom he had been living, moved to Staples, a small community about eight miles from Dublin Plantation. Joseph then lived with his son Edward in Prairie Lea and died there in 1922. At the time of his death Joseph Francis was described as "a pioneer Texan and a prominent figure in the development of the Southwest."<sup>11</sup>

In 1919, three years before his father's death, S.J. Francis constructed a clay tile dairy barn at Dublin Plantation and produced milk for the commercial market. The barn still stands today and has been remodeled into a guest house. He also built two chicken houses and purchased a gasoline powered tractor for farm operations. The chicken houses are no longer standing. S.J. Francis also acquired an adjoining tract from his brother William. After Joseph Francis' death, S.J. Francis and his brothers continued to operate the farm, but by the mid- 1930s, it was leased to a

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<sup>9</sup> Guadalupe County Deed Records O:47, September 25, 1876; O:49, September 26, 1876; Happell Cemetery, Guadalupe County, Texas, gravestone inscriptions .

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Non-Population Schedules, 1880, Guadalupe County, Texas; Guadalupe County Deed Records 17:327, February 26, 1901; 42:272-274, October 28, 1913; 42:342, November 12, 1913.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, Guadalupe County, Texas; "Pioneer Citizen Dead," *San Antonio Express*, January 16, 1922, 4.

succession of tenants. It is estimated that the house remained vacant from c. 1938 until 1961.<sup>12</sup>

S.J. Francis' son, David Gregg Francis (1896-1958) married Mattie Bookman Craig (1898-1991) of Navasota in 1922. The couple had three children—Lillian Craig (1924-1983); Martha Anne (1926- ); and Sidney J. Francis II (1932- ). It was Sidney J. Francis II, the current owner of Dublin Plantation, who began to restore and maintain the house and surrounding property beginning in 1961. The house was badly deteriorated when he began renovation work fifty years ago. Since that time he has stabilized and renovated the house, making few changes to its overall appearance. He also repurchased two hundred and fifty acres of adjoining family property, and today owns approximately five hundred acres of his great-grandfather George Francis's original seven hundred and sixty-five acre tract. The house remains a private residence and the surrounding acreage is leased.

**Historians:** Clare E. Cloudt, Maria Watson Pfeiffer, and Felix J. Ziga, 2012

**Project Information:** Sidney J. Francis II, great-great grandson of George Francis, the current owner of Dublin plantation, has sponsored this documentation project. The project was undertaken by graduate students of the College of Architecture at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Field documentation was conducted by Luis D. Ahumada, Whitfield R. Brackett, Clare E. Cloudt, Brett N. Davidson, Analay De La Cruz, Herminio Griego, David J. Kraft, Jason B. Lindsay, Aleksandra Mcqueen, William C. (Beau) Schenck, Zhao Xu, Felix J. Ziga. The final drawings were completed by Clare E. Cloudt, Whitfield R. Brackett, and William C. (Beau) Schenck, under the faculty supervision of Sue Ann Pemberton, FAIA.

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<sup>12</sup> Sidney J. Francis II to Maria Watson Pfeiffer, June 12, 2012; Guadalupe County Deed Records 116:251-254, January 2, 1924. S.J. Francis had conveyed the 137.13 acre tract to his brother William in 1913 for \$9,000 (Guadalupe County Deed Records 42:342-342, November 12, 1913). William deeded the property back to S.J. Francis who forgave his notes in 1924.