

Describe the present and original (it known) physical appearance

The Grayson House is a story and a half, frame, galleried, Federal style plantation house set in the flat country of southern Franklin Parish. Once numerous outbuildings have all disappeared except for a dilapidated barn which is less than 50 years old. The house was constructed c.1836 and renovated in 1910. Despite the alterations made at the time of the renovation, the house retains its architectural integrity. It still possesses those Federal features which make it significant.

The Grayson House began as a pretentious galleried dogtrot structure, two rooms deep, with a highly unusual elliptical arch set in the open passageway. A straight stair in the passageway gave access to half the garret. Access to the other half was provided via a corner stair in the front east room. Four chimneys with elaborate Adams mantels were set against the exterior of the side walls.

It appears that some of the details were locally made while others were bought from a mill. Locally made features include:

1. the staircase in the front east parlor,
2. the mantels (though individual parts were milled), and
3. the solid turned Doric columns

Milled features include:

1. the planed fascia boards which form the frames for doorways and windows (All door and window frames have corner blocks.),
2. the upper moldings of the Adams type mantels (The mantel panels rest on crude, heavy, fluted pilasters.), and
3. some of the doors which have elaborate molded panels.

Many of the exposed interior surfaces are covered with wide, beaded, tongue and groove boards. Windows are 12 over 8. The gallery has intricate, turned balustrades.

In 1910 the house underwent a major renovation. Alterations made at this time include the following:

1. The open dogtrot passageway was enclosed and a new bungalow type staircase was installed replacing the original. This staircase is viewed through a pair of square posts set in antis resting upon bookcases. An unusual and original features of these posts is the decorative pattern of chains and hanging wooden knobs,
2. An outbuilding was moved up the west side of the house This is now reached via the rear gallery
3. A rear kitchen-dining room was built. This wing, which is reached via an open breezeway, contains more or less standard turn-of-the-century woodwork with dark stained wainscoting.
4. Finally, the present front and rear single dormers, the porch screening, and square posts terminating the porch balustrade were added The original columns remain under the screening.

It should also be noted that a few of the exterior shutters have been lost through the years.

In addition, it appears that the present front steps were added sometime after the 1910 renovation.

Assessment of Integrity:

Despite these changes, the house still retains the described Federal style features which make it architecturally significant.

Specific dates	c.1836
Builder/Architect	Builder - Wiley B. Grayson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)  
Criterion C

The Grayson House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a rare example of a Federal style residence within the context of northeastern Louisiana. Although it can no longer be termed a dogtrot, the basic shape and most of the details of the house survive. It stands as a "full blown" Federal style residence. This can be seen in its light but elaborately paneled doors, its Adams mantels, its light-turned Doric gallery columns, and its planed woodwork with corner blocks. This is significant because there are relatively few Greek Revival structures remaining in northeast Louisiana, much less a surviving pre-Greek Revival (Federal style) structure such as the Grayson House. Therefore, it is architecturally significant on the local level as an example of an extremely rare style within the context of northeastern Louisiana.

History:

The Grayson House was built c.1836 by Wiley Blount Grayson, who resided there until his death in 1870. Grayson was born in 1807 in Kentucky and migrated with his family first to Mississippi and then, sometime between 1812 and 1814, to Louisiana. Apparently he and his wife were living at or near the location of the present house by c.1830. In April, 1836 Grayson mortgaged property including "a 565 act tract of land in Sec 36," said tract containing a "dwelling house, kitchen, negro cabins, stables, corncrib and cotton gin." Thus, this is presumed to be the approximate construction date for the house.

Major Bibliographical References

Wiley B. Grayson Papers, deposited by present owner at LSU, Shreveport

Grayson Family Bible.

Historical Sketch of Wiley B. Grayson and Grayson House, Prepared by Owner, Located in Grayson House National Register File, Louisiana State Preservation Office.

Fortier, Alcee, Louisiana. Vol. I, pages 439-440.

Franklin Parish Vertical File, Louisiana Room, Middleton Library, LSU, BR.