One of Harlingen’s oldest houses sits at 301 E. Madison across 3rd Street from the Casa del Sol. This two-story structure was built in 1917 and occupied on 1/2/18 by the family of Elmer William Anglin. Mr. and Mrs. Anglin, together with their four small children, had come to Harlingen in 1907 after having lived in Alpine for seven years. The Anglins had married in Gonzales County on March 8, 1898. Upon arriving in Harlingen they resided near the Lon C. Hill complex, now the park. Around 1910 they built their first house, a two-storied wooden-framed building north of the newly-created Lake Harlingen. The site, on today’s Woodland Drive, has a newer house currently owned by Mike Powers.

Mr. Anglin managed the properties and business ventures, including land clearing, of Hill. In this job he was closely connected to the growing young town which came into official being in April 1910. Anglin also had the unenviable and never-ending job of grading the dirt streets of the new town. He served on the first cemetery committee as a trustee, served as a school trustee prior to 1920, and after 1910 he performed as police chief for 16 years. From 1939 through 1959 he was a justice of the peace. He was an accomplished fiddler who played by ear.

Anglin’s brother, Everett, originally from Gonzales County, Texas, came to the Valley in 1905 to serve as a Texas Ranger. Several years later and as the revolution in Mexico began to heat up, Everett became a mounted customs inspector along the border. In one hairy incident he rode into Gen. Lucio Blanco’s camp at Rio Bravo in an attempt to reclaim horses belonging to two Texans who had their horses at a ranch south of the river. Not only did Blanco refuse Anglin’s request, but he directed him to a hanging site where, among others, he viewed the body of an acquaintance, Juan Alamia. Alamia, who had served in the Spanish-American War as one of Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders, had refused to be conscripted into Blanco’s forces.

As banditry incidents escalated north of the border, Everett, two years later in January 1915, was to play a more important role. A tipster from Mexico named Dr. Andres Villareal had alerted him to some suspicious activities. Anglin, in turn, notified Hidalgo County deputy sheriff Tom S. Mayfield. Anglin and the doctor had set a trap to snare the alleged plotter whom the physician had identified. At the McAllen store of Deodoro Guerra, Anglin and Mayfield confronted one Bacilio Ramos Jr. In his satchel they discovered a document which was to be known as the Plan de San Diego. After the contents revealed it to be a revolutionary manifesto, Ramos was arrested and imprisoned in Edinburg. This story and more are documented by testimony Anglin provided US Sen. Albert Fall’s committee and which was published as “Investigation of Mexican Affairs, Preliminary Report of Hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 66th Congress, 1920.”
Revelation of the Plan shocked those Americans who knew of it. It heightened suspicions of those who already felt a conspiracy was in effect and planted seeds of distrust in those who were neutral in regards the intentions of Mexico’s revolutionaries.

The origins of the Plan are foggy, but the manifesto was supposedly written in the town of San Diego, Duval County on January 6, 1915. Probably drafted in Monterey by imprisoned Huerta supporters, it sought to foment a revolution by the formation of a “Liberating Army of Race and People”, these being Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Japanese, who would “free” the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California from US control. In an all out race war all white males over age 16 were to be executed. A second version envisioned Indians being brought into the cause, and a third called for the establishment of a “Republic of Texas” to encompass an area considerably larger than the state’s present size.

Venustiano Carranza and his ally Blanco were fighting first to overthrow the Huerta regime and later to reign in the independent Pancho Villa. When north-of-the-border damages escalated and the number of raids from individuals under the territorial controls of Gen. Carranza and Villa increased, the Federal government belatedly responded by sending thousands of Army and various state National Guard units to the border. Unfortunately the disturbances generated extreme repercussions, repressions, and the deterioration of relations between Valley Anglos and Mexican Americans. Excesses by Texas Rangers were not held in check. Only later, through the strong efforts of Valley legislator, Jose T. Canales, were the Rangers called to task. Then the state legislature reorganized them into a considerably smaller and more accountable organization.

Anglin’s discovery of the Plan of San Diego led to the nadir of Anglo-Mexican American relations in the area but also brought about the eventual restoration of order that would allow the valley to grow and prosper in the early 20th century.

When World War I started Everett raised a troop of cavalry, received a commission of captain, and served at Camp Stanley before being discharged. From that time on, the family called him by the nickname “Cap.” In 1926 he went into the real estate business with an office in Harlingen. The firm of Anglin Brothers and Berly promoted farm land and offered excursions to potential buyers.

In March 1959 the Valley Morning Star carried a story about the Elmer Anglin’s 61st wedding anniversary celebration at their Madison Street home. In attendance were their children Emmett, Lawson and Charles of Harlingen, Everett of Dallas, and daughter Mrs. Mamie Konze of Corpus Christi. The 1920 U.S. Census indicated that 20 year old Emmett O. was working as an assistant bank cashier and already married to Vesta L. His eighteen year old brother D. Ross was acting as a foreman for canal grading and seventeen year old Andrew L. was a hardware salesman. Lawson would later follow his father into law enforcement by becoming a Cameron County motor patrolman.
Youngest son Everett, named after his uncle, gained some fame in his own right. On 4/18/43 then twenty seven year old Lt. Anglin of the 339th Fighter Squadron –the Jungle Air Force- flew one of sixteen P-38s that destroyed the bomber carrying Adm. Isoruku Yamamoto, commander of the Japanese fleet and the planner of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Several accompanying Japanese planes were also shot down.

Anglin descendents still residing in Harlingen include Lawson’s daughter, Mardelle Anglin Ayers and her two children, William H. Ayers Jr. and Vickie Ayers Gonzales.

The attached photograph is provided courtesy of Vickie Ayers Gonzales. It shows Valley law enforcement officers A. C. Dow, Marcos Hines, Hidalgo Deputy Sheriff Tom Mayfield, and Harlingen police chief E.(Elmer) W. Anglin.

Mamie Anglin*

Mamie Anglin was a charter member and president of the first garden club organized in the Harlingen area, the Harlingen Garden Club. She was always interested in all civic projects and did much to shape and beautify our city.

She enjoyed all kinds of plant material, but her "First Love" was the Hemerocallis which she grew. She propagated and shared her "Day Lillies" with many people.

There are homes in the Harlingen area today that are made more beautiful because of her generous sharing of plant material with others.

In 1956 she was honored with a life membership by the Harlingen Garden Club.

* added April 2010