

[1994 Brochure]

The Owners

The earliest record of the property is the 1809 Nacogdoches census that states the dwelling of Andres de Acosta and his family was located on the east side of the road leading northward out of town, *calle del norte*. Acosta was a prominent citizen during the Spanish and Mexican periods. In 1826, Acosta sold the property and house to Joseph Durst. It is not clear from the deed records whether the house sold to Durst is the one now standing. While it is possible that the present house was built by Acosta before the sale, it is perhaps more likely that Durst built it since it is an early example of Anglo architecture. Durst served as Nacogdoches' alcalde, or mayor, from November 1826 until January 1827 and later founded the town of Angelina (now Linwood).

Many of the 19th century owners played important roles in the development of Texas; among them are

- David Hoffman, who represented Nacogdoches at the Consultation of 1835 as the people of Texas debated the growing list of grievances with Mexico;
- Isaac Watts Burton, who led a company in the Battle of Nacogdoches in 1832;
- Thomas J. Rusk, who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, commanded Texan forces after San Jacinto, served as Secretary of War and Chief Justice of the Republic of Texas, and was one of the State of Texas' first senators;
- William Ochiltree, who was Secretary of the Treasury and Adjutant General during the Republic, a delegate to the Secession Convention of 1861, and a member of the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy; and
- Madison G. Whitaker, a member of the Committee of Safety and Vigilance in 1835, who was in Rusk's company at the Siege of Bexar and a 2nd Lt. at the Battle of San Jacinto.

Civil War veteran, Lawrence S. Taylor, who acquired the property in 1870, was the son of Charles S. Taylor (a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence) and was married to Harriet Durst Irion, daughter of Anna Raguet and Dr. Robert Irion, friends of Sam Houston. The Taylor heirs owned the house until 1989 when The Jack and Claudine McKinney Historical Foundation purchased it. The foundation is responsible for the preservation and continuing restoration of the house and grounds.

The House

Before the present house was built, evidence suggests there was an earlier shelter, probably a *palisado*—an adobe structure built around vertical posts set in the ground. The

house now standing is one of the few pre-1850 dwellings in Nacogdoches still on its original site. Architectural analysis and archaeological survey indicate the existing house was built between 1820 and 1839. The 1 1/2-story house is representative of a type of frame construction common in the Deep South between 1820 and 1850.

The front porch is supported by four boxed Doric columns, and the front of the house has two paneled entry doors. The paneled shutters on the windows are rare on structures built before the 1850s in Texas. The house was built of sash sawn lumber except for hewn sills and galloping joists on the first floor and circular sawn Greek revival mantels and Doric columns. Since more circular sawn materials were not used, the house was probably built before 1839 when circular saws were introduced to the area. Successive owners refined the house by covering the original exposed joists in secondary rooms with ceilings and by adding Federal revival mantels on the first floor and Greek revival mantels on the second floor. The first phase of the restoration process has returned the exterior to its condition during the era of the Texas Republic. A complete restoration will require additional funding.

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