

# Washington Anderson House “El Milagro”

**Built 1859**

**City & Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks**





**Washington Anderson (1817-1894)**  
Photo courtesy of the Williamson Museum.

## Washington Anderson's Early Life

Washington "Wash" Anderson (1817-1894) was one of Round Rock's founding settlers and played a significant role in developing Round Rock and Williamson County. Wash was born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia on January 21, 1817, to father Dr. Thomas Anderson and mother Chloe Glascock Anderson. Wash's mother died in 1819 when he was two years old. In February 1835, Wash arrived in Port Lavaca, Texas with his father and his brother, John D. Anderson, at the age of eighteen. The next month, the Mexican government granted the family 4,428 acres of land in Travis County.

## The Surrender of Santa Anna



Washington Anderson



Photo from the Library of Congress.

*The Surrender of Santa Anna* depicts the surrender of Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna following the victory of Texas forces at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. Painted in 1836 by William Henry Huddle.

The Texas Revolution began only six months later. Wash fought in the Battle of San Jacinto, which granted the Republic of Texas independence from Mexico in 1836. Wash, his brother, and his father all served in the war and later received land grants known as headrights for their service.

**"The old pioneer Wash Anderson was the true hero of San Jacinto, although history gives him no praise....He had more to do with turning the tide of the battle than Sam Houston did."**

- John Osburn Nash, quoted in the Houston Chronicle

## Settling in Round Rock

Wash married his cousin Mary Ann Glascock in Bastrop in 1838, and they had one child, Chloe, in 1839. In 1841, the Republic of Texas granted Wash a 1,107-acre headright in Williamson County for his service in the Texas Revolution. In 1843, Wash also received Wiley Harris' headright in present day Round Rock from his father. Wash's father had received the Harris headright after Harris died unexpectedly. In 1843, Wash moved with Mary Ann and Chloe to Wiley Harris' headright and constructed a log cabin with a saw and grist mill. The mill washed away in a flood two years later, and Wash moved away for a few years to recover his fortunes.

**Mary Ann Glascock Anderson (1820-1904)**



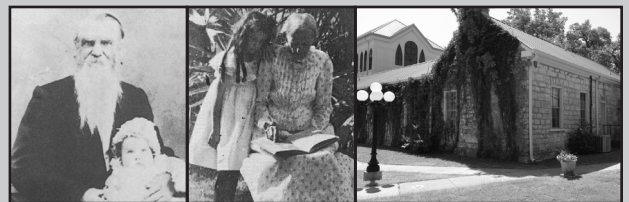
**Chloe Ann Anderson Taliaferro (1839-1882)**



Photo of Mary Ann from *Round Rock, Texas: From Cowboys to Computers* (2002), Karen R. Thompson.  
Photo of Chloe from *Historical Round Rock Texas* (1985), Karen R. Thompson & Jane H. DiGesualdo.

## Family Life in Round Rock

Chloe married Rev. Robert Taliaferro and moved to Austin, where they had seven children. In 1860, Wash built a house in Round Rock for Chloe and her children to visit in the summers. This house is now known as the Wessels-Payne House, a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, and is part of the First United Methodist Church campus. Wash and Mary Ann spent their later years in Round Rock caring for their grandchildren after Chloe and Robert died prematurely.



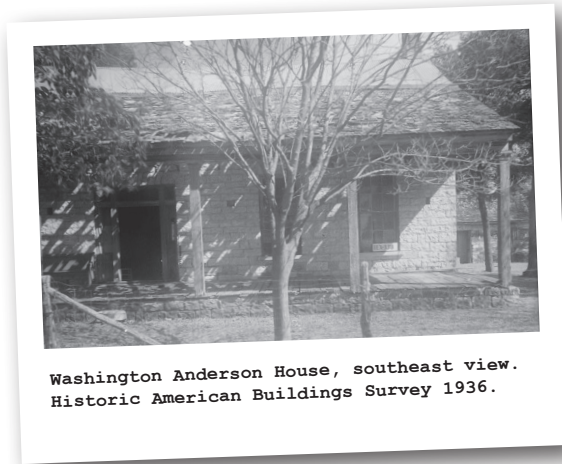
Left: Wash and a great-granddaughter. Center: Mary and her great-granddaughter Mabel Taylor at their home on Brushy Creek. Right: Wessels-Payne House, 2012.

Photos from *Historical Round Rock Texas* (1985) by Karen R. Thompson and Jane H. DiGesualdo and *Round Rock, Texas: From Cowboys to Computers* (2002) by Karen R. Thompson.

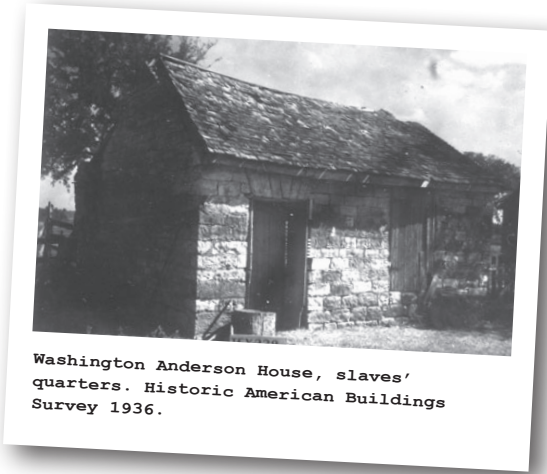
# The Washington Anderson House (“El Milagro”)

Wash hired a Swedish foreman and assigned him four slaves to build his house between 1855-1859 on the site of the former cabin and mill. The house still stands today at 901 Heritage Center Circle. Constructed of native white limestone with cedar and cypress woodwork, the structure’s original floorplan was formal and symmetrical with an office on the porch and service entrances on the east side of the property adjacent to the separate slave quarters. The home was described as having very high ceilings.

The house was in disrepair and had been vacant for years when it was documented for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1936.



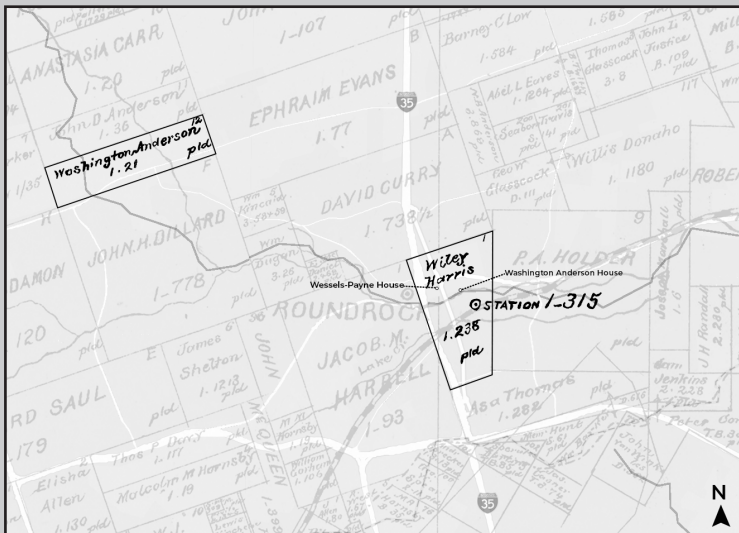
Washington Anderson House, southeast view. Historic American Buildings Survey 1936.



Washington Anderson House, slaves' quarters. Historic American Buildings Survey 1936.

Between 1949-1951, Col. and Mrs. Ross Irwin, with the assistance of architect August Watkins Harris, rehabilitated the house and added a second floor. The Irwins named the house “El Milagro” and applied for state historic designation under that name. In the 1980s, much of the site was sold for an apartment development, and the house became an office. The City of Round Rock purchased the property in 2014 to facilitate its maintenance and restoration. The city continues to preserve the house as a local and state historic landmark.

## 1880 Original Texas Land Survey



The Washington Anderson tract was the 1,107 acre headright Wash received in 1841. The Wiley Harris tract was conveyed to Wash in 1843. OTLS map sourced from the General Land Office and superimposed on a map of present-day Round Rock.

## Legacy in Round Rock

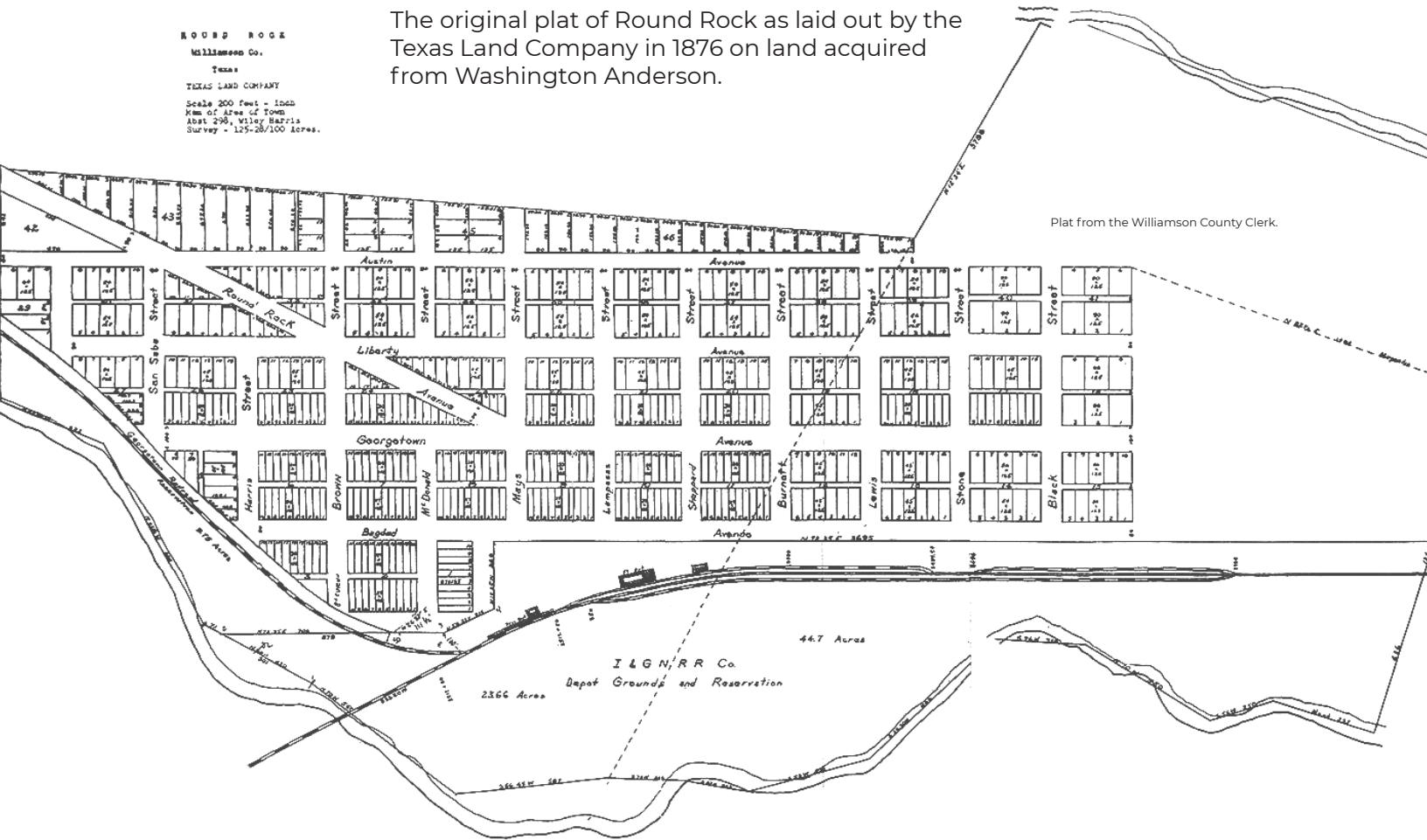
Wash was an entrepreneur and developer who had a profound influence on Round Rock. Wash began his real estate holding in the area with his 1841 headright grant, and by 1850, Wash owned nearly 4,700 acres of land in the area.

In 1868, Wash sold three acres of his land for the site of the Greenwood Masonic Institute, the first secondary school in the county. Wash also sold barreled water from his spring on the north side of Brushy Creek.

In 1876, Wash sold 150 acres of land to the Texas Land Company, a subsidiary of the International and Great Northern Railroad, to be used for right of way and a new townsite he hoped would be named “Andersonville.” Instead, the newly platted land remained part of Round Rock and became known as “New Town.” Wash remained active in the community until his death in 1894.

ROUND ROCK  
 Williamson Co.  
 Texas  
 TEXAS LAND COMPANY  
 Scale 200 Feet = 1000  
 Km of Area of Town  
 Abst 296, Wiley Harris  
 Survey - 125-28/100 Acres.

The original plat of Round Rock as laid out by the Texas Land Company in 1876 on land acquired from Washington Anderson.



Scan for sources and information about Historic Preservation in Round Rock



Washington Anderson House, 2005.



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 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES