

# Octagon Architecture Originated in the United States



Hall-Crull House

An Octagon House represents one of the few architectural concepts to originate in America. Plans for this type of house were worked out by Orson Squire Fowler of Fishkill, New York, and printed in 1848. It stimulated the imagination of many builders, just as the idea of building a round barn rather than a square barn or a rectangular barn attracted the attention of builders.

Mrs. Walter Crull lives on the north side of the black-top between Mays and Raleigh and has lived in an Octagon House since 1928. Few who drive along the highway fail to notice it. The white frame building gleams through tall shade trees. Pink and white striped awnings overhang the first floor veranda, the second floor veranda, and the double windows downstairs.

The house was built in 1855 but it has been carefully preserved by its owners and is now recognized as one of the heritage houses in the state.

Because it does represent a period of original building, and because it was built from virgin timber cut from the farm, the house was selected by Bob and Emy Waggener as one to sketch for the notepaper which glorifies historic Rush County.

The original house was built by William Hall. There were four rooms downstairs and four rooms and a large hall upstairs. Since that time, a dining room, kitchen, and bath have been added to the rear of the eight sided house.

The recessed front verandas make this house an architectural marvel. The veranda has slender 8 sided columns reaching from the front steps to the roof. The old banisters on the porch and balcony are shaped like paddles. There are two front doors in each facade. There are double windows on each of the eight sides. All windows have eight panes of glass with four in the upper sash and four in the lower sash. The original glass in some of the windows show the imperfections of early glass blowers.

The living room and front bedroom have six sides but give the impression of being square. The double windows on the southeast and east side of the living room give an excellent view down the highway.

Very few homes built at this time included built-in storage space but Mr. Hall used all triangles and corners for presses and clothes closets. There were nine presses and closets in the original eight rooms. One of the

downstairs presses has an 8 foot door from virgin poplar. The presses have the original black iron locks with heavy brass keys.

The large front fireplace which originally heated the living room and bedrooms has been preserved but is no longer used for heating.

Orson Fowler gave this reason for building an eight-sided house. He wanted window space in each room. His theory was "The nearer spherical our houses, the more inside room for outside walls."

All Octagon Houses were planned as two story buildings with low pitched roof and with little or no ornamental treatment on the outside. The geometric shape was sufficient.

The Hall-Crull Octagon House carries out his theories of building and, since the house also includes the recessed verandas, is acclaimed in national magazines as one of the best built and finest examples of this style of architecture.

The builder, William S. Hall was a school trustee and founded the Raleigh school, one of the first consolidated schools in the United States. Mr. Hall had 10 children and built the house so the heating system could be in the center of the house.

From

THE SAMPLER BOOK OF  
RUSH CO LANDMARKS  
AND SEQUENTENNIAL  
YEAR 1966