

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

**DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **OCT 20 1975**

DATE ENTERED **JAN 1 1976**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

West, General Francis H., House

AND/OR COMMON

The Octagon House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1410 17th Avenue

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Monroe

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Wisconsin 53566

CODE

55

COUNTY

Green

CODE

045

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Rudolph F. Regez

STREET & NUMBER

1410 17th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Monroe

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 53566

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Green County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Monroe

STATE

Wisconsin 53566

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II: The Inventory

DATE

1975

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built by Francis H. West, the Octagon House in Monroe is unique in its plan and incorporates functionalist ideas and inventions. Constructed in 1860-1861 in brick, it is two stories high with an octagonal cupola and an extension to the rear (east). This extension is part of the original plan. West's design is formed by a juxtaposition of four octagons into a plan resembling a four-leafed clover.

The ground floor octagons contain a foyer, which includes the staircase (entrance from the west), a parlor, a study, and a dining room. A kitchen, family room, and patio occupy the rectangular wing to the east. The second floor octagons consist of a large bathroom and the stairway hall (above the foyer), and three bedrooms. Another bathroom and a library occupy the area to the east.

The interior is spacious and functional. West also included an ingenious plumbing system which was based on the gravity principle. Faucet pressure was provided through an attic tank which had to be filled by pumping water from a well. He was also concerned with ventilation, and an "air-conditioning system" was based on a funnel-like opening in the cupola floor which led to the floor below.

While West was concerned with functionalism and spatially integrated design, he was also concerned with details. For example, an intricate octagonal pattern was utilized for the inlaid parquetry on the first floor. The exterior trim and the roofline show Italianate orientation. The projecting cornice shows rather elaborately carved trim, with teardrop terminations. Originally the porch had equally elaborate fretwork, now removed due to its deterioration.

Since 1969 the exterior red brick has been covered with charcoal-colored paint.

7

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

**PERIOD**

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Association with historically significant local personage
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

**SPECIFIC DATES**

1860-1861

**BUILDER/~~ARCHITECT~~**

Francis H. West

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Francis Henry West (1825-1896), pioneer Monroe settler from New England, was a lead miner, prosperous lumbering operator, state senator, California Explorer, and a Civil War hero. He also displayed special talent as a builder by constructing two octagonal houses in Monroe. The second of these, which is the subject of this nomination, is unique in its design and rare in its use of an early plumbing and ventilating system. West's experiments with the octagonal style of architecture began before 1858 when he built a frame octagonal prototype which occupied the other half of his property until the 1930s, when it was razed.

West's octagon house differs from the other existing examples in the state in its use of the octagon in an additive manner. How much West was indebted to Orson S. Fowler's The Octagon House: A Home for All (New York, 1847), which was instrumental in the spread of the octagon style from coast to coast for the following decade, remains an open question. He may also have been familiar with David Rittenhouse's 18th century octagonal observatory in Philadelphia, since he was married to Emma Rittenhouse, a descendant of the well-known Rittenhouses of Philadelphia, and may have seen the building prior to the publication of Fowler's book.

West's design is unique in Wisconsin and it extends Fowler's spatial theories beyond the single octagon concept.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Hamilton, E. C., "Monroe's Octagon House, 1410 17th Avenue (East Street)," (unpublished report in support of Wisconsin Registered Landmarks Nomination) (Monroe, Wis., 1971)  
Hamilton, E. C., "Monroe's Octagon House Landmark and Its Builder," (unpublished research paper, Monroe, Wis., 1975)  
Monroe Sentinel, June 5, 1861; *ibid.* (obituary of Gen. West), March 11, 1896

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1.0

UTM REFERENCES

A [ 1 6 ] [ 2 8 3 6 1 0 ] [ 4 7 1 9 3 4 0 ] B [ ] [ ] [ ]  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] D [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Birutta Erdmann, Preservation Planning Assistant

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

DATE

15 July 1975

TELEPHONE

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

SHPO Signature

~~XX~~

*James Norton Smith*

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

*10/14/75*

FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Active*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*11/1/76*

ATTEST:

*Ronald M. Stenberg*

DATE

*12/31/75*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Act*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 20 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 1 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

West, General Francis H., House

Edmund C. Hamilton (non-staff)  
723 18th Avenue  
Monroe

May 18, 1975  
608/325-2323  
Wisconsin 53566

Donald N. Anderson, Assistant Director, Historic Preservation  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
816 State Street  
Madison

July 16, 1975  
608/262-0746  
Wisconsin 53706