

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Carolina	
COUNTY: Laurens	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 20197	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Octagon House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Old Holmes or Watson House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
619 East Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Laurens

STATE South Carolina	CODE 45	COUNTY: Laurens	CODE 059
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mrs Fred Walker

STREET AND NUMBER:
100 Woodrow Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Laurens

STATE: South Carolina	CODE 45
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Laurens County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Laurens Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Laurens

STATE South Carolina	CODE 45
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
South Carolina Preliminary Survey of Historic Places

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

STREET AND NUMBER:
1430 Senate Street P.O. Box 11,188 Capitol Station 29211

CITY OR TOWN:
Columbia

STATE: South Carolina	CODE 45
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER
20197

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered slightly Unaltered

(Check One)

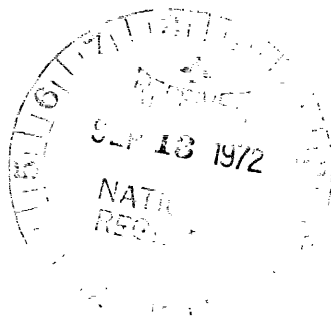
Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Exterior: The Octagon House, constructed in 1859, is considered to be the first concrete house built in South Carolina. This eight-sided structure with hipped roof has four porches and four extended rooms on the first-floor level and a central octagonal core for the second-floor level. The octagonal design is maintained throughout, even down to eight-sided porch columns and chimneys. The only alterations to the exterior have been a rather crudely performed lowering of the roof line of the two first-floor rooms flanking the front porch. Window design and placement varies in each facade, but all have granite sills and lintels. Projecting eaves of the first-floor shed roofs are covered but unadorned while those around the second-story roof have boxed cornices. The upper roof is crowned by a large square skylight which illuminates the interior central hall of both floors.

Interior: The octagonal motif that is so prominent on the exterior is muted inside the house. Square rooms were constructed within the octagonal central core by including triangular closets in the interior design. A front and central hall are located on the first floor, the latter of which is open through the second story to the skylight. Surrounding the front and central halls are three rooms and a kitchen. A curved stairway rises from the right of the front hall to the second story interior balcony-hallway. A steeper rear stairway also leads to the second floor from the kitchen on the first floor. Originally, five bedrooms and one bath surrounded the central open hall on the second floor, but all bedrooms have been partitioned, thus doubling their number. Fireplaces are located in all rooms and were placed on any wall desired since the entire structure is of concrete. Below the first floor are basement rooms with outside access only. Most of these rooms were originally used as domestic slave quarters, but one small one built entirely of field stone served as an ice house and collection point for moisture which accumulated in the concrete walls and was transferred to this location by a series of drain pipes.

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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

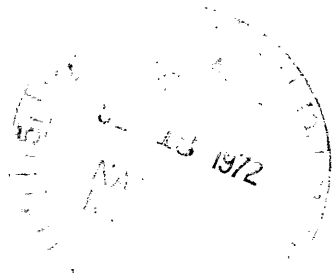
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1859

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry		<u>Structural</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Structural Significance: The Octagon House displays several interesting architectural features, but its primary significance is the early appearance of the method of construction utilized by the designer and builder, Zelotes Lee Holmes, a Presbyterian minister and educator of up-country South Carolina. The son of the Reverend Mr. Holmes, Nickles J. Holmes, provides an excellent account of the building procedures in his Life Sketches and Sermons: "My parents had a large plantation in the country, and some 50 to 60 slaves... When I was 12 years old (1859), my father, having been elected Professor of the Laurensville Female College, moved up to Laurens and built a large, twelve room, concrete house... This concrete house that my father built was, I think, the first of the kind in the state. The walls were thick, made of lime, cement, sand, and crushed rock, put in between planks and in this state mortar poured over the rock and allowed to dry, and then the planks removed. It was built by his own slaves mainly, not only carpenters but field hands and even children in the yard, from thirteen or fourteen years old; including myself, carrying mortar in paint kegs on gang planks. My father planned it and superintended all the work himself. He had the large rock for the foundation split out in the quarry, and hauled the flint rock from the fields around and had them crushed with sledge hammers." The imprint of the wooden frames can still be seen in the walls of the basement. The walls are from 12 to 15 inches thick and include hollow passages which provide a cooling ventilation system throughout the house. Though many technical improvements have since been made, the basic system of concrete construction herein employed is essentially the same as that used today. As one of the first concrete houses in South Carolina, the Octagon House stands as a landmark to a structural technique that did not fully mature in the state until the 20th century.



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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Deposition by Joseph A. Holmes, grandson of designer and builder of the Octagon House, 1962. (Photocopy located in Historical Preservation Division, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.)
 Holmes, Nickles J. Life Sketches and Sermons. 1920. (Son of builder and participant in construction of the Octagon House.)
 Irwin, Betty W. "Octagon-Shaped House First Concrete Structure in State." The Laurens Advertiser, April 24, 1963, pp. 1-2.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		34 ° 29 ' 56.8 "	82 ° 00 ' 04.5 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **one**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Wright Caughman Historic Preservation Assistant

ORGANIZATION: South Carolina Department of Archives and History DATE: August 24, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
 1430 Senate Street P.O. Box 11,188 Capitol Station 29211

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia STATE: South Carolina CODE: 45

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Charles E. Lee
 Charles E. Lee

Title Director, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert W. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 3/20/73

ATTEST:
J. P. Raalford
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 3/16/73

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