

**Historical Marker - L104 - Loren Andrus House / Loren Andrus House (Marker ID#:L104)**



**Front - Title/Description**

**Loren Andrus House**

Loren Andrus (1816-1901) came to Macomb County from New York State in 1828. He served as an assistant engineer on the survey of the Clinton-Kalamazoo Canal, but gained prominence in agricultural work. In particular he focused on the breeding of fine wool sheep, and he helped organize both the Macomb County and Michigan Agricultural Societies. Loren and his wife, Lucina, hired his brother-in-law David G. Stewart, a Macomb County builder and architect, to construct this house. Stewart built an Octagon, popularized by phrenologist Orson Fowler, who touted the Octagon as a spacious building form that offered healthier air circulation and an abundance of light. Andrus himself made the bricks with local clay. The house has an elaborate central spiral stairway that leads to the cupola.

**Significant Date:**

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

**Registry Year:** 1971    **Erected Date:** 2006

**Marker Location**

**Address:** 57500 Van Dyke Avenue

**City:** Washington

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:** 48094

**County:** Macomb

**Township:** Washington

**Lat:** 42.71739450 / **Long:** -83.03536800

**Web URL:**

**Back - Title/Description**

**Loren Andrus House**

Loren Andrus built Michigan's most elaborate remaining example of the Octagon house form in 1860. In 1945 Detroit businessman Albert Schmidt donated money to the Detroit Board of Education for the purchase of the farm, which gave "city boys" practical experience in their agricultural studies at Wayne [State] University. By 1952 the 330-acre self-supporting farm had 90 Holstein cattle and 1,200 hens. Eggs were sold in green and gold cartons (Wayne's colors) with the slogan "Educated Eggs from the Wayne State University Farm." Despite the efforts of subsequent owners, the house eventually deteriorated and was ravaged by vandals and wildlife. In 1986 a non-profit organized to save the house. The Friends of the Octagon continued to restore and maintain the property into the twenty-first century.