

ABOUT INTERCEPTED SIGNS

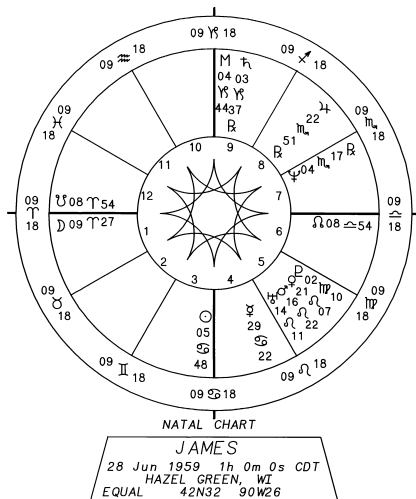
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by David Dukelow

Part of the calculation of a horoscope is the calculation of house cusps. These are divisions, like markers, that divide the chart into twelve sectors, like a pie cut into twelve pieces. There are many different ways of determining where these divisions should occur. The three most popular methods are called Placidus, Koch, and Equal Houses. ("Koch" is pronounced like "Coke".) In each of these systems the Ascendant (ASC) is the same. (This point is where the horizon points to in the zodiac.) The ASC appears at the nine o'clock position. It is the cusp of the first house, which extends from the ASC to the second house cusp, which usually appears at about the eight o'clock position. Thus the houses are counted out in a counter-clockwise direction. Each house has one cusp. The sign that is on the ASC is the rising sign. Note that the horizon rotates through the zodiac each day, spending about two hours in each sign.

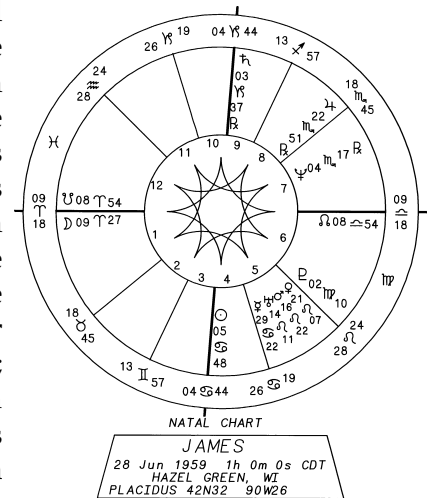
When the houses are all equal in size — that is, when each is exactly 30 degrees in width — the chart is said to have Equal Houses. In this house system, as in the chart for James, below, someone with 9 degrees and 18 minutes of Aries on the ASC would have 9 degrees and 18 minutes of Taurus on the second house cusp, and so on. The only house system that always gives equal houses is the Equal House system, of which Chart One is an example. Notice that each sign occurs on one and only one cusp, and that no signs are left out. (If your ASC is Cancer, then in the Equal House system your second house cusp would be in Leo, the cusp of the third house would be in Virgo, and so on in the usual zodiacal order.)

The Midheaven (MC, from the Latin words "Medium Coeli", meaning the middle of the sky) is a very important personal point in the chart. In both the Placidus and the Koch systems the MC is the cusp of the tenth house. In the Equal House system it can be different



from the tenth house cusp. (In Astro's BNC-format charts, the MC is always listed in the upper left-hand corner of the page, regardless of the house system you pick.) Placidus and Koch houses differ only in the intermediate house cusps — cusps 2, 3, 5, and 6 and their opposites. In this regard, note that the ASC, since it is the first house cusp, is always exactly opposite to the seventh house cusp, which is also known as the descendant (DSC). The second house cusp is always opposite to the eighth house cusp, and so on. The cusp opposite to the MC is known as the IC (from the Latin words "Imum Coeli," meaning the lowest point of the heavens).

Look at the chart to the right. This is James's natal chart done with Placidus houses, our default house system for natal charts. His ASC is in Aries. He has Taurus on the second house cusp, Gemini on the third, and Cancer on the fourth. So far, except for the numbers, this is like the Equal House chart. One might expect Leo on the fifth cusp but he has Cancer on this cusp also. He does have Leo on the sixth house cusp. Note that he does not have Virgo, the sign after Leo, on the next cusp; instead, he has Libra on the DSC. Virgo is an **Intercepted Sign** in this chart. Further



note that the sign opposite to Cancer, namely Capricorn, occurs on two cusps and that Pisces is also intercepted. Pisces is intercepted in the house opposite to the house in which Virgo is intercepted.

In general, for births at his latitude and above — he was born in the southernmost part of Wisconsin — intercepted signs are relatively common. If we switch to Koch houses for James (see the chart at the beginning of the top right column on the reverse of this page) we see that with this house system he has Leo and Aquarius as the intercepted signs. Furthermore, the interceptions now occur in different houses. This situation is also common; that is, the signs that are intercepted can vary depending upon which house

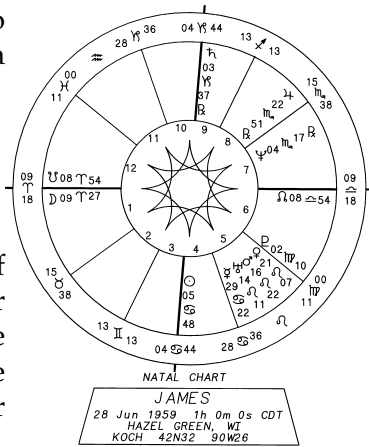
system is used, and so can the houses in which the interceptions fall.

WHICH HOUSE SYSTEM IS CORRECT?

In part, this is a matter of individual taste. In order of preference, the three most popular house systems used by our customers are Placidus, Koch, and Equal Houses. If you don't like the idea of interceptions you may want to make Equal Houses standard on your account with Astro. (James feels, by the way, that Koch houses work best for his chart.)

Individual taste is involved in how you go about reading a chart. When **rules** are emphasized, the question of intercepted signs complicates things. The Ruler of a house is the planet that rules the sign on the cusp. For example, if Cancer is on the cusp of the fourth house, then the Moon rules that house. If Cancer is on both the fourth and fifth house cusps, then the Moon rules both those houses. (See Charts 2 and 3). This means, in part, that the relationship (aspects) of the Moon to the planets occupying that house (or those houses), if any, would be given greater weight. (Mars rules Aries, James's first house, and Venus rules both Taurus and Libra, his second and seventh houses, etc.) Many people feel that planets occupying intercepted signs are more difficult for people to express. There is considerable experience to suggest that if a sign is intercepted in the first house, it is fundamental to the chart. For example, someone with Aries intercepted in the first house may have persistent difficulty in asserting their individuality in an appropriate manner. Some people, however, just take intercepted signs as a warning flag — they slow down and take more care in interpreting the planets and houses that have the interceptions.

The last two charts are relocation charts for James. The chart on the left is a relocation chart to Panama City, Panama. This city was chosen only because it is close to the Equator. (A relocation chart is a chart for the same Universal Time at which a person was born, but for a location other than the birthplace.) In this chart, even though we have used the Placidus system, James has houses which are nearly equal in size. Moreover, there are no interceptions here. This chart illustrates the possibility that if you have interceptions natally, their influence may be modified by relocation. (Re-



member that a relocation chart is just a nuance or coloration to the natal chart; the natal chart should always be prominent in your mind.) To take the other extreme, the final chart relocates James to the capital city of Iceland, which is just below the Arctic Circle. In this chart James has Leo on three cusps! There are four intercepted signs!

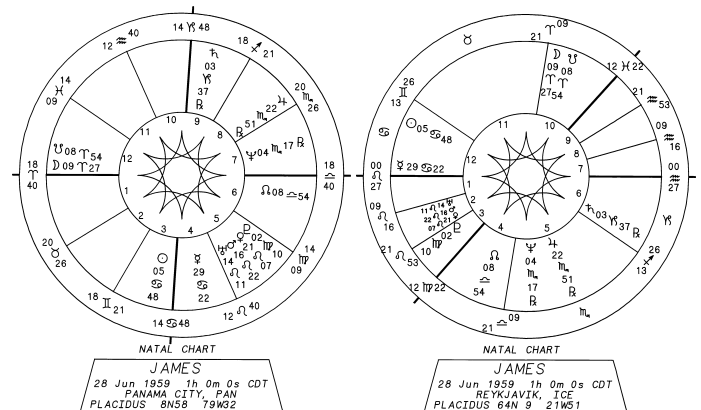
Finally, here are a few miscellaneous thoughts on intercepted signs and the terminology about them. The signs that are intercepted are sometimes called **floaters**. (Some computer programs will print the floaters; some won't.)

A further bit of terminology: in the third chart (top left) the sign of Leo is intercepted. The same thought can be expressed by saying that the fifth house in his chart contains an interception, or (more specifically) that Leo is intercepted in the fifth.

A chart (natal or relocation) with an MC near to either zero Cancer or zero Capricorn will always have houses that are approximately equal in size. By "approximately", I mean within ten degrees. Charts with MCs far from either of these two spots will be far more distorted. The greater the distance of the birthplace or relocation place from the Equator, the greater the distortion. You may wish to examine a table of houses for more insight into this phenomenon.

There is a great diversity of thought about intercepted signs, and some of the ideas presented here are not universally held. As always, keep an open mind and live with a couple of different charts for a while.

If you are interested in exploring these ideas in depth with regard to your own chart, you can order



Personalized Astrology Lesson 15 (PAL15) and the **House Comparison Add-On (HC)** – must be ordered with a regularly priced chart on the same birth data). The **House Comparison** sheet gives the house cusps, and the house placements of your planets, in **nine** house systems, in tabular form. You may also want to order **PAL7**, which examines rulers.