

ORIE LEBUS HOUSE



This house is one of the four which will be on display during Cynthiana's first Homes Tour scheduled for May 22 and being sponsored by the Woman's Club of Harrison County. Located at the corner of Church St. and Oddville Ave., it is the home of Miss Martha Thom Lebus.

The land on which this old house is built is a part of the original 1000-acre Powers tract which then reached to the river. In 1821, George Hamilton, who ran Cynthiana's first store in the 1700's (where the jail now stands), bought 36½ acres of the tract and in 1839 sold 16 acres of it to Joseph Cromwell.

The Joseph Cromwells were living in the house in 1842 according to records in the possession of their great-great granddaughter, Mrs. Earl McIlvain (Louise Cromwell). The records were written by Mrs. McIlvain's aunt, Miss Betty Cromwell. But whether Joseph Cromwell built the house or

whether it was built by the former owner of the property, George Hamilton, is unknown. Mrs. McIlvain has in her back yard on Mill St. today, the millstone which Joseph Cromwell had brought over from Germany and which Mrs. McIlvain's father, John Cromwell, removed to his Main St. home from the old place, at a good deal of expense, simply for sentiment's sake.

Joseph Cromwell (a descendant of Oliver Cromwell of England) came to Cynthiana in 1821 and ran a store, selling agricultural implements, where the Dixie Restaurant now stands at the corner of Walnut and Pleasant Streets. In 1842 he moved to Missouri, taking six of his eight children with him and leaving this old house and his business to his eldest son, Henry, who expanded the business and branched into the building of fine carriages which establishment soon occupied most of the Walnut St.

block between Pleasant and Pike Streets. In 1855 Henry Cromwell sold the house to Samuel Dills who in turn left it to T. V. Dills.

Little is known of the 15 years of the Dills occupancy except that during the War between the States, several rooms of the house were used as a hospital for Confederate soldiers, and here it was that after the Battle of Cynthiana, Cornelia Woodyard nursed Capt. William J. Stone, whom she later married. Capt. Stone's leg was amputated here and buried in the yard. Nurse Cornelia's great-niece, Martha Thom Lebus, the present mistress of the place, no doubt gives a fleeting thought now and then to the buried leg, as she digs in her flower garden.

In 1870 T. V. Dills sold the place to Jake Woolford.

Woolford owned it and lived in it for 28 years. Here the Woolfords reared their three children, Louie Cook, Bird and Mary Lydia.



(Jake Woolford was a son of Peter Woolford who owned a great deal of early Minneapolis, Minn., and every Christmas gave each of his seven children \$1000). Jake came here, married Josephine Cook (great-aunt of Mrs. H. D. Frisbie and Miss Cora Addams) and ran the Redmon Distillery near Cynthiana on the Leesburg Pike. His daughter, Mary Lydia, had a beautiful wedding at the old house, marrying J. W. Megibben. Then the J. W. Megibbens built the house next door where they lived for many years.

People living today can remember when the entire side yard of the old place was a pond on which they enjoyed Sunday afternoon boat rides.

Orie Lebus bought the place in 1898, and here he and Mrs. Lebus (Miss Bird) reared their three children, Lewis Martin, C. P. and Martha Thom.

They added the circular front porch and the upstairs dormer windows, but this was not the end of "Miss Bird's" remodeling—far from it. According to Mr. Orie, on

every rainy day she knocked out a partition and on the next rainy day she had it put back.

Mr. Orie was born at Oddville in 1860, a grandson of Seraphin Lebus who came from Alsace, France, in 1828. Mr. Orie liked to tell how he started his career clerking in Havilandsville general store which was run by his uncle, W. D. Hickman. He was for eight years individual bookkeeper for The National Bank. In 1898 he was made a Kentucky Colonel by Gov. W. O. Bradley. He helped organize the Knights of Pythias in 1887, having become a Mason in 1886. He headed the school board for many years and was for 23 years secretary of Cynthiana Royal Arch Masons. Special agent for the Cincinnati Tobacco Warehouse Co. until 1907, he devoted much of his time to his 500-acre farm which circled one-third the distance around Cynthiana. He was a power in Republican politics and in financial circles. Unpretentious as he was prominent, he will long be remembered for his blustering good humor.

The imported wallpaper in the dining room of the old house was put on in 1927 and cannot be duplicated today. In the same room stand two huge mahogany floor candlesticks and the lamps on the sideboard, all brought by C. P. Lebus from Santo Domingo where they once adorned the cathedral of Christopher Columbus.

The portraits in the double parlor shown here are of Mrs. Lebus' mother, Mrs. I. T. Martin (Martha Washington Woodyard) and Mrs. Martin's brother, Bullett Woodyard. For Mrs. Martin, three of her granddaughters are named: Martha Alline Garnett Linehan, Martha Rigg Torrence and Martha Thom Lebus. The lady in the portrait was called "Curly" as a child and had no other name until she was eight. She then proceeded to name herself for Martha Washington, because she was born exactly 100 years to the day after George Washington.

Here on Dec. 25, 1938, the Orie Lebus celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. The recep-



tion was attended by several hundred guests, in addition to their grandchildren, Orié II, John Reynolds and Betty Ferrell Lebus, the

three children of Lewis Martin Lebus (deceased), as well as their son and daughter, C. P. and Martha Thom Lebus. The huge recep-

tion was the social event of the season and was outstanding even among the many and lovely parties for which the old place has long been famous.