

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## HOUSE TOUR



On Saturday, June 2 from Noon to 5:00 P.M. the Cobblestone Society and Museum will hold its 1990 tour of historic homes in the Albion and Lyndonville area. Tickets for the tour will be on sale that day beginning at 10:30 both at the Cobblestone Church in Childs and the Pullman Memorial Church in Albion.

One of the homes on this year's tour is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Pollard and family at 61 South Main in Lyndonville. This attractive Greek Revival house is also considered one of the historic sites in Orleans County as it was selected by Irene M. Gibson for inclusion in her book "Historic Sites" published in 1979 by the Orleans Chapter DAR and the OCHA. Miss Gibson, in her book, calls it the Mudgett-Weld Homestead and indicated that it was built of locally fired brick in the 1830's. She states:

"The property was first owned by Stephen W. Mudgett (1797-1850), a tanner and shoemaker, who was in Ridgeway in 1816, but 'soon removed' to what is now Lyndonville. There he set up a tannery and shoemaking business; his tannery, says Signor, was 'a little below the bridge.'"

"Mudgett received a deed 9 August 1833 for 50 acres.... on the east side of the main street. No record of 'articles' to land in Yates can be found for most sections, but it must be assumed that Mudgett and most other settlers were in Yates clearing land for some time prior to receipt of their deeds. A businessman who evidently prospered at tanning and shoemaking, Mudgett was one of several pioneers (among them Samuel Tappan and Richard Barry) who built the first flour mills, in 1836. He is said to have built several houses, including this brick one on Main Street."

"He was on the first Board of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when the society was incorporated in 1827, in Lyndonville. His wife, Ella Sawyer, was the daughter of John Sawyer..."

"A merchant, Royal Chamberlain, bought this house in 1838. He and Robert Simpson had built a warehouse in 1828 on the lake shore north of Yates Center, probably the first at that location..."

"Arad Thomas states that Royal Chamberlain was from Vermont and that he 'settled here (at Yates Center) about the time the village began to be established.' He was for one term judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

"The third owner, who bought the house in 1847, was Joseph Babcock. However, the family which owned it longest, from 1863-1923, was the

Elisha Weld family....In 1817 Thomas Weld brought his family to Ridgeway and settled about a mile south of the present Village of Lyndonville. Thomas' son Elisha was born in Reading, Vermont and married Laura Parker in 1821.

In 1855 Elisha listed himself as a farmer, in the Census of that year. He had come from Vermont, had been in Orleans 36 years - that is, since 1819 - and had a wife and three daughters in his household. His wife, Laura, was from Rensselaer County originally. Their daughters named in the 1855 Census were Nancy, 25, Cynthia, 17, and Lucy, 14, all born in Orleans County. Their daughter Jane may have been married by this time, living with her husband in a separate household. Eight years later, in 1863, Elisha bought the brick house and was probably the owner who enlarged it for at that time the Welds had three of their daughters living with them; Jane W. (Mrs. H.G. Scott), Cynthia U. Weld, and Lucy A. Weld. It is said that two of the Weld daughters taught in Yates Academy.

"In 1924 the 'heirs of Elisha Weld' sold the house to Frank B. Visscher. Visscher's wife, Charlotte, sold it in 1934 to Donald R. Wilson and his wife, Margaret B. Wilson."

In 1963 the house was purchased by the Richard Farwells and in 1979 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Pollard acquired the residence.

The house at first glance is Greek Revival in style hut having been built in the 1830's is somewhat transitional in nature. The beautiful front entrance with two sidelights and transom, is very bold and unmistakably Greek design. By contrast, the overhang and cornice is somewhat delicate and restrained in character which is more of a Federal Style characteristic. The lintels are Medina Sandstone and a louvered fan or sunburst appears in the front gable. In 1981 the Pollards had the paint removed from the brick, thus restoring the original appearance of the structure. Inside, a spacious hall welcomes those who enter. Of particular note is a Federal Style staircase with a most delicate railing and supporting spindles. The newell is also very slender with spindles which encircle it. The woodwork in some rooms however, is Greek Revival in character with deep grooved recesses and large convex mouldings.

In decorating the home, Mrs. Pollard has utilized the architectural features, thus enhancing and creating a delightful and historic interior atmosphere most suitable for an 1830's residence.