

## *The Abel Earl House*

by Elva Gheen

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*For almost 125 years, the house carefully and skillfully built by Abel Earl has stood at the center of the quiet, serene community which bears his name in southern Cleveland County. Now the home of his granddaughter, Miss Thelma Earl, and her stepmother, Mrs. W. D. Earl, the house, though having undergone many alterations through the years, stands as an excellent testimony to the stout workmanship of the man who built it. "I've always been told that grandfather Earl built this house in 1840," said Miss Earl. It was the first dwelling built on the present site of Earl while the rest of the land in the community was still forest. The original house consisted of two large rooms opening off a central hallway, which had wide double doors opening into the front and back yards. In the rear was an entirely separate building used as a kitchen. At each end of the house was a large brick chimney. Fireplaces on the interior were broad enough to hold cordwood for heating and cooking.*

### ***Hand Dressed***

*"Many people think this was a log house, but it was not," related Miss Earl. The house as originally built had a solid framework of heavy timbers with wide, hand dressed boards, nailed horizontally, and used to finish both the exterior and the interior. Today, a small portion of the original wood siding remains along the front porch while the remainder of the house has shiplap weatherboarding. The hallway most closely preserves the original condition of the interior as built by Abel Earl. Wide boards run horizontally panel the walls. Massive wood paneled doors completely fill the more than six foot wide doorway, which originally opened into the back yard, but now opens into a spacious dining room beyond. The original hand-worked, molded casing remains on all the door frames as well as the original handmade doors. A landmark equally as old as the house is the "upping block" in the front yard. "Grandmother Earl rode side saddle and used the block to mount her horse," said Miss Earl. The block is actually a massive round weathered stone about two feet high, with a smaller stone used as a step to mount the block. The block now rests a little closer to the house than originally placed, for it was moved in recent years when the highway in front of the house was altered. The house built by Abel Earl has seen many additions and*

*alterations through the years. About 45 years ago, according to Miss Earl, a major alteration was the raising of the roof line, although an upper story was not added. Original windows have been replaced with larger ones, a long front porch and four large rooms have been added. Today it is a spacious, rambling, comfortable home about three times larger than the original structure.*

### **Wall Clock**

*A handsome wooden wall clock, which was hung when the house was built, still hangs in one of the original rooms. A massive pine corner cupboard with solid paneled doors and a four poster corded bed of acorn design are other quite old pieces of furniture still used by the family. "I was always told that Abel Earl selected this site for his house because of the excellent springs at the foot of the hill out back," told Mrs. Earl, who will be 92 this summer. Behind the house is a large sturdy, log barn in an excellent state of preservation, a tremendous black walnut tree with branches spreading at least 75 feet was, according to Miss Earl, just a sapling when her father, William David Earl, born in 1863, was a boy. Another interesting chapter in family history, Miss Earl relates, is the donation by her Grandfather Earl and a Mr. Black of enough land for 50 building lots at the time the railroad was being constructed through southern Cleveland county.*