

The Land.



pastures stretched toward the horizon. The few other discernible parts of the farm were clustered near the road, discrete elements in the landscape.

Every farm needed a source of potable water: sometimes it was a spring or river but in Ashtabula County it was more often a well that provided a clear point of origin for the farm, a starting place for laying things out. The well was centrally located to provide water for scrubbing floors and boots, arms and necks, fruits and vegetables; for watering livestock; and for washing clothes.



The Well Pump.

The early farmhouse was often a two-story wood structure with four rooms. It was high on the south with a porch, low on the north. Here, the kitchen, of all rooms, was the most occupied. Except for the stove anchored to a chimney flue, furniture was shuffled around. The family might, at seasonal intervals, shift something as big and heavy as the kitchen table for canning in the fall or feather plucking in the spring.

The privy was a small building serving as the family toilet. Its location was critical. It had to be close to the kitchen door for convenience, but also at some distance or downhill and beyond the well. Polluted water, no less than a failed crop, threatened the family.

Last was the barn. This was the granary, the storehouse for the



The Farmhouse.

fruits of the family's labors. The barn might have been some combination of buildings, including a silo or corncrib. But their combined function was to store a great quantity of harvested material for people and for animals and, in bad weather, to provide shelter for the animals themselves.

These five parts were essential. None could be removed and any more would have been redundant. They appeared as discernible parts of a repeating pattern in the countryside.

The growth of a farm was proportioned to maintain a family. The family might have added a new house but only to provide for uninterrupted succession. A firsthand account by Evelyn Lillie Austin records how five generations of her family have occupied the same two houses on a farm near Gageville, Ohio:

My story begins on October 3, 1883. My grandparents, Sidney and Phebe, were married that day . . . and after completion [of a new house] spent their entire married life there.

My father Harry was their first child . . .



The Privy.



The Barn.