had first to cross the river, an easy task since the river was low. On his return with the precious document in his pocket he got off his course and spent the night in the forest. Next day, when he had again found his way, he discovered that overnight rains had so swollen the river that he was unable to cross at the same ford. He had to take a roundabout course to cross the bridge at Kellogsville, 5 miles upstream. Meanwhile, the wedding party, including the preacher who had come 3 miles on foot from Kingsville, waited an extra day for Atwater's arrival.

The abundant rains that so often cause river flooding also grow rich pasturage. Early farmers planted corn, oats, wheat, potatoes, apples, and garden vegetables in the clay soil, but it was grass that grew best and without human intervention. Consequently, the area became known early in the 1800s for its dairy farms and their production of butter and cheese. Referring to her great grandfather's account books, Rose B. Lawrence, a long-time resident of Ashtabula County, writes a personal account:

> Once or twice a year butter packed in 100 and 500 pound furkins or tubs was taken to Ithaca and New York cities, a slow and tedious [trip] by canal, ox team and stage coach—the trip being made in a week to ten days.

Today, much of Ashtabula County remains rural, spotted with the occasional village or less often a town. The land is mostly open with fields, pastures, and woods. However, there are fewer full-time farmers, who may also be working part-time jobs in towns. Wells are giving way to municipal water supplies. Regional shopping centers and scattered housing subdivisions are beginning to appear. Water is still a major force. It arrives in long summer rains, carving its way through gardens and pastures before draining into the Ashtabula River. In winter it lands as deep snow, yawning over roads, tree trunks, barn doors, and people. The melting snow in spring soaks the soil and overflows the river.

The Farm

Farm rhythms measured the potential choices of a single family. Daily chores were central to the life of the farm family; within these measured cadences most people expected to find their possibilities for self-fulfillment. The growth of the region presented new opportunities, but they emerged first at the circumference of established life, too remote for most people to be affected by them.

The tempo of the early farm was uncontrived. Clocks were used, but chores were more a function of sunrise and first frost than of wound springs and pendulums. Basic patterns were the result of continuously repeated actions.

Accents in the rhythm coincided with the forward movement of nature. The morning of each day and the spring of each year marked not only the start of natural cycles but also the beginning of separate rounds of work. One round had to be completed daily: cooking, collecting eggs, feeding pigs, and milking cows. Another round was completed yearly: tilling the soil, harvesting the crops, and grinding the corn into meal. Shorter rounds fit neatly within longer ones, each adjusting to variations in the other. Days repeated within seasons. Seasons repeated within years. Years repeated within variations too sluggish for people even to notice that things were changing around them.

Farms, when seen in the landscape, appeared timeless, complete and independent. The essentials of life were contained within the boundaries of each. This self-sufficiency (the provision of food, fiber, fresh water, shelter, and waste disposal) required the ritual connection of five basic parts: land, well or spring, house, privy, and barn.

Farmers first had to clear the land, an arduous task accomplished by the family with hand tools and perhaps a team of oxen. Some woods always remained, a trace of the vanished forest, useful for lumber and for game. Orchards, field crops, and, above all,