ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY years ago, my great-grandfather, Josiah Starr, began clearing our farm out of the virgin forest of New Connecticut. He, with 47 other men and 1 woman, had come on horseback from Middletown, in old Connecticut, in 1803 to take possession of the 180 acres of land he had purchased from the Connecticut Land Company for $1.50 per acre. The area in which the farm is located later became known as the Western Reserve, and the farm is now a part of Stow Township, Summit County, Ohio, being situated 30 miles out of Cleveland toward Akron.

Since Josiah was a bachelor, he had not only to hew the logs, build a house, tend the livestock, and grow his crops, but he had to cook and mend as well. Three years later, according to a letter carried back to Connecticut by Stephen Miller, a visiting friend, he has already cleared 12 acres of heavy forest and had planted the land to corn, wheat, and rye. The virgin soil was highly productive and his crops grew luxuriantly. Miller reported that two days a week were sufficient to produce a comfortable living, and predicted that the people of this area would soon settle down to a life of incurable indolence and petty pleasures.

The forest was made up mostly of oaks, maples, and beeches with a scattering of hickories and black walnuts, and some elms along the streams. The soil consisted of about 6 inches of silt loam underlain by a somewhat impervious clay. Two streams ran through the farm, one furnishing a never-failing supply of spring water.

Five years of single blessedness in the forest sufficed for Josiah, so he wooed and won Mary Cannon, a young lady from Massachusetts who was teaching school in the neighborhood. The next 25 years were busily and happily spent in the clearing of more land, splitting fence rails, erecting barns and outbuildings, and rearing a family of eight children. About 1823, a dam was built on the ever-flowing stream and a large over-shot wheel, furnishing power for a saw-mill, was installed. Five years later, the old log cabin finally yielded to a much larger and, for then, very modern and pretentious house, which is still the farm home and is in a good state of preservation. Apparently Josiah's energy knew no bounds, for he took on the additional task of making boots and shoes for the community.

THE SECOND GENERATION TAKES OVER

Fifty-six years had passed when Moses Call, my grandfather, who 15 years previously had married Josiah Starr's daughter, Maria, purchased and took possession of this, his father-in-law's farm. But trouble lay immediately ahead for the new owner of the land. On June 5 of that year, the "great freeze of 1859" formed one-half inch of ice and killed all the crops. To make matters worse the replanted corn was struck 12 days later by a terrific hail storm. Fortunately, buckwheat could still be grown for food and feed. Michigan white bluestem wheat, costing $1.35 a bushel, was seeded later that fall.

Moses Call was a cooper, by trade. So he established a shop for making barrels of all sizes and styles from staves split out of the mighty white oaks that were still plentiful on the farm. Being also a public-minded man, he was soon chosen superintendent of the local cheese factory, was appointed Justice of the Peace, and was elected County Commissioner. Notwithstanding that such work was more to his liking than farming, Grandfather Call continued on with dairy cows. Since the cheese factory operated only

Fig. 1.—Plan of the Call farm located near Kent and 9 miles northeast of Akron, Ohio, by courtesy of G. W. Conrey.

1Presented before the joint banquet of the Soil Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy at Cincinnati, Ohio, November 11, 1943.
2Kent, Ohio.
3About 20 rods of the old rail fence are still in use.
4In 1906 this stream was again harnessed with a turbine water-wheel and generator which furnished electricity for the farm until 1933.