Agriculture in Queens County  
(1842)

By Albert G. Carll, Jericho.

It is easy to forget that Glen Cove was once an agrarian community, blanketed with sprawling farms growing wheat and corn and raising pigs, sheep, and dairy cows.

Glen Cove was part of Queens County until the formation of Nassau County in 1898, and part of the Town of Oyster Bay until 1918. As such, much of the information on agriculture in Glen Cove is intertwined with accounts of agriculture in Queens County.

In the early 1840’s the New York State Agricultural Society had requested each county-level agricultural society to prepare a description of the “state of agriculture” in their respective county. At the time, the United States was experiencing a severe depression in the economy (described by Henry Randall, Secretary of the State Agricultural Society, as an “unexampled pecuniary disaster and agricultural depression”). In his capacity as Secretary of the Queens County Agricultural Society, Albert G Carll responded with the following description of the state of affairs here in 1842. Carll was one of the founders of the Queens County Agricultural Society in 1841 and served as the organization’s secretary from 1841 to 1849. A resident of Jericho in the Town of Oyster Bay, he was also Town Clerk for Oyster Bay in the 1840’s and Postmaster of Jericho in the 1850’s. The report was published in the Transactions of the New York State Agricultural Society, Volume 2, in 1843.

- Daniel E Russell
out manure, and in the fall prepared to be lain down, well ma-
nured, sown with wheat or rye, and grass seed. The grass is
then cut for a few years; then pastured a year or two, and again
goes through the same cultivation. Of course it depends much
upon the character of the man, and the size of his farm.

The horses are generally good ones, of the English race
breed; and as the very stout, heavy kind are not as necessary
as in a more rough and hilly country, they are found to be the
most handy and profitable on the farm, (at least where but a few
are kept) and as roadsters, are ready to carry the products to
the market. A ready sale is always found for such horses in the
New-York market.

But few cattle are raised in this county, as the demand in
the New-York market is such as to make a good calf a month or
six weeks old, worth as much as it would be at two years of age.

Our cattle are generally from Suffolk county, and the inte-
rrior of the State. The large part of our cattle are natives, while
the favorite breeds are Durhams, and Durhams crossed with
natives.

Considerable attention has of late been paid to the rearing
of sheep, and many of our farmers have fine flocks of the most
improved breeds. The Merinos and Saxony's were long the fa-
vorites, and perhaps are yet the most numerous; but as sheep
are raised by our farmers for the mutton rather than the wool, it
is found that the heavy breeds are the most profitable.

Of swine there are all varieties — from the stately Berk-
shire, who by general consent is placed at the head of that
honored and honorable family, and the delicate Chinese whose
unrivalled flavor has brought them in high favor with the pal-
ates of epicures — to those who require, when full grown, a
yoke to prevent them from passing between the pickets of the
garden fence. The favorite breed appears to be a cross of the
Berkshire and the best native breeds.

Large numbers of swine are fatted for the New-York mar-
ket, and the plan most generally adopted is to let them run in
pasture through the summer, and feed them the slops of the
kitchen and dairy, and about the first of September to put them
in pens and feed with apples, potatoes, pumpkins, unsound
ear, &c. Some who have the conveniences, boil the apples,
&c. which is most generally approved. They are slaughtered in
November and December.

The cattle and sheep are generally fattened upon grass,
although during the winter many are fed in stalls. But little
attention has as yet been paid to the cultivation of roots as
food for stock. Those who have used them deem them more
profitable than grain.

There are many plows in use, among which may be named
Freeborn's, Freeborn & Hitchcock's, and Wood's, the latter
two forming perhaps the majority. Shroud's, made at
Skaneateles, is used by a few, and much liked; and recently the
"Wiskonsan plow" has been introduced, and by some approved
of.

The square harrow, a few cultivators, and a few rollers are
in use. The revolving horse rake is used but a little as yet.
Threshing machines have been used by a few for many years,
and within the last three years many have been introduced. The
owner threshes the grain at so much a thousand sheaves, re-
moving about from farm to farm as required. They are consid-
ered handy, as they enable advantage to be taken of any rise in
the market.

Straw cutters are but little used.

Scythes are mostly the English, forty-eight inches in
length.

The farms generally do not consist of more than one hun-
dred cultivated acres, and the average value is not far from $80
per acre.

There are large quantities of timber of the three oaks,
chestnut, and hickory. In the east part of the county bordering
on Suffolk, there is considerable pine, but it does not grow
large. The locust grows generally on the north side and in the
middle of the county, and large amounts are annually shipped
to New-York. Our farmers have within a few years paid much
attention to its cultivation, and now have large tracts well cov-
ered with thrifty young locusts.