

Carroll Yesteryears
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Industrious Landowners Didn't Let Much Go To Waste
By Mary Ann Ashcraft

Most of us who use the internet are constantly astounded by what we find there. Maybe not all of it is totally accurate, but the internet answers many of our questions.

On the Carroll County Genealogical Society's website, you can find information gleaned from the 1850 and 1880 agricultural censuses that accompanied family statistics for Carroll County. Jeff Duvall, a CCGS member, spent many hours transcribing data that includes farmers' names, acreage owned and its value, plus the crops and livestock being raised. If you want to know how much Indian or broom corn your great grandfather's farm produced, you can find it there.

Once the Western Maryland Railroad was completed across the width of the county in the 1860s, farmers could put perishable items such as milk, eggs, and butter on a train that ran daily to Baltimore. The milch cows of Peter Greenwood and John W. Myers, New Windsor area residents, produced 1,000 and 2,000 pounds of butter respectively in 1880. David Englar's 150 hens laid over 500 dozen eggs the same year. It is unlikely Englar was able to sell that many eggs locally, so he probably sent them to Baltimore. Most farmers reported smaller quantities of eggs or butter which they probably used themselves or exchanged with neighbors for something else.

Pinkney J. Bennett also lived in the New Windsor district. The census shows his 16 cows produced 11,000 gallons of milk in 1880. Bennett owned a creamery which probably explains where that milk was used. Perhaps Joseph Stouffer and Uriah Englar sent their combined 20,000 gallons of milk to the creamery, although it is more likely it went via train to Baltimore. These names represent just a few of the farmers across the county who exported milk via the Western Maryland, B&O, or another railroad.

The 1850 census for the large Franklin District that stretched from above Taylorsville to Mt. Airy showed farmers raised considerable quantities of tobacco. You would be mistaken if you thought only farmers from Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore grew tobacco. The combined acreage of Cornelius Brashears and Joseph Penn yielded three tons. Those were just two of many farmers who apparently felt this labor-intensive crop was profitable even though it quickly depleted the soil. In 1880, Franklin District farmers were still raising tobacco. Who knows whether they sold it to the Manchester District's many cigar factories or shipped it elsewhere.

Farms in Carroll County, especially those across the northern tier, were not large and the yields of corn, wheat, oats, barley, hay, Irish potatoes, etc. reflected that. Most families owned a few hogs and sheep, but not in large numbers.

Carroll had several woolen mills operating during the 19th century. With the exception of Louis Englar's 168 sheep that yielded almost 600 pounds of wool in 1880, what kept those mills in

business? As early as 1844, Silas Hibberd advertised stocking yarn available from his mill outside New Windsor.

Curious readers looking at the census will discover other agricultural products reported—fruit, honey, wax, wood, even wine. Industrious landowners didn't let much go to waste.

Mary Ann Ashcraft is a library volunteer at the Historical Society of Carroll County.



Photo source: Courtesy of Historical Society of Carroll County

Photo caption: Costumed 20th century re-enactors spin, wind, and knit wool on the Fogle farm in Carroll County.