

Mac Bain Farm
203 Hickory Lane

Welcome to the Mac Bain Farm. In 1999 the towns Environmental Commission was assigned the responsibility of overseeing the Mac Bain Farm. The farm covers 5 ½ acres of land and consists of fields and a house. John McCaffrey is the caretaker of the farm and lives with his family in the house. This land was the original site for Temple Emanu- El and the land was exchanged for property on Piermont Road where the temple was finally built.

You will be walking around the fields and to the stream that borders the rear of the property before returning to our starting point.

(Start Walking Down The Hill)

These fields once belonged to Ken Mac Bain who did limited farming on the site. This land had been in the Mac Bain family since 1906. He was well known for the dog kennels that he ran, often boarding up to 100 dogs. Besides a thriving boarding business, Mr. Mac Bain bred prize winning Scotties and Terriers. Often he would visit Scotland to select breeding dogs. The property was originally 10 acres and was given to him by his family as a present upon graduation from Cornell. Occasionally surplus food from the farm was sold in local markets. Mr. Mac Bain was one of the early naturalists in this area and the farm reflects his interest in growing things.

(Keep Walking Down The Hill And Turn Right At The Deer Fence)

You have probably noticed the black deer fence surrounding the fields. There is a very large and active deer population here and in the Palisades Interstate Parks Commission land. Without this fence, little would be able to be grown on this farm. Long before the flowers and vegetables were ripe, the deer, ground hogs, woodchucks and other animals would have eaten the plants. Even with the fence, deer sometimes jump it or enter when someone leaves a gate open. There is an amazing amount of wildlife living in this area. Besides the animals just mentioned, there are foxes, rabbits, red tail hawks, owls, turkeys, raccoons, swallows, turkey buzzards, coyotes, field

mice and occasional bears. All this within seven miles of New York City, one of the most populated areas in the world.

(Follow the Paths Around The Edge To The Gate And Go Through. Turn Left And Go To The Stream Bank)

These apple trees comprise a small orchard that Mr. McCaffrey was able to plant. The money from Closter's Open Space Funds has helped connect the farm to the Anderson Avenue path along the trail we are now walking on. The Borough built this trail from the end of Anderson Avenue, just up the hill to the rear of the farm. We will see the crossing bridge that was constructed and the pathway leading to you. If you wish to take this trail up the hill, bear to the right and it will bring you to the end of Anderson Avenue. Follow Anderson Avenue and make a right turn at the first corner (Hickory Street). Just past the first block going down the hill is the Entrance to the Mac Bain Farm. Otherwise you can turn around and return back to the farm.

Be Sure To Close The Gate that connects the Farm and the Anderson Avenue Trail. There are many, many deer who will devour the crops at the farm.

The Mac Bain house was built in 1934. The Sandstone was quarried from the property by the stream and the sand for the mortar was also gathered from the property. Mrs. Mac Bain designed the house using a traditional Dutch Colonial shape. Mrs. Mac Bain also had an extensive rose garden in the front of the property. John Mac Caffrey has spent an enormous amount of labor and effort restoring the house. Prior to the Borough acquiring the property, the house was empty and was gradually falling into disrepair. Thanks to Mr. McCaffrey's efforts, the house has been totally restored and upgraded with city water, gas, sewers and upgraded electrical supply. The house is faced to catch the sun and overlook the fields. The fields now grow stringbeans, tomatoes, lettuce, beets, cabbage, broccoli, basil, peppers, parsley, acorn squash, gourds, pumpkins and asparagus.

(Continue Walking Back To The Starting Gate)

Besides those vegetables, there are many trees commonly seen on farms. We have Chinese chestnuts, 6 kinds of apple trees, 3 kinds of pear trees, apricot, peach and quince trees. Many of these trees were planted by Mr. Mac Bain

and continue to grace the property. This farm belongs to all the citizens of Closter. All are welcome to pick the crops for free. We do ask that a few simple rules be followed. Bring a shape knife to cut the vegetables and fruit from the plant. Pulling and tugging will damage the plant and reduce growth of additional food. Take only what you can use today and leave some for the next visitor. After all, this is for everyone so sharing is important. You are always welcome back to pick more and have it at its freshest. Please, always close the gate. There are just too many critters out there that will have a feast once inside. Also, once inside, they are trapped and have no safe hiding places. The farm is open from 9:00 AM until dusk on Tuesday through Sunday.

The Closter Environmental Commission thank you for visiting and welcomes you back anytime. This farm belongs to all of us.