

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
TOWN OF CAROGA

Fulton County Planning Department  
April 27, 1977

The preparation of this report was financially aided through a grant from the State of New York, Department of State, Division of Community Affairs, pursuant to Chapter 348 of the Laws of New York of 1973.

# CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
PLANNING GUIDELINES	2
ORIENTATION	3
LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS, 1970	3
EDUCATION AND INCOME, 1970	5
THE LOCAL ECONOMY	7
PROSPECTS FOR GROWTH	10

## CREDITS

### TOWN SUPERVISOR

Emma Krause

### CAROGA TOWN PLANNING BOARD

Robert Kane, Chairman  
Marie Johnson, Secretary  
Gordon Croucher  
George Curtin  
Jesse George Lake  
Richard Lorence

### FULTON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD STAFF

Author - Paul J. O'Connor, Town Planner  
Supervision - Harold P. Kaulfuss, Planning Director  
Graphics - Gary D. Ovitt, Planning Aide  
Stenography - Sally Johnston, Prov. Sr. Stenographer

SPECIAL CREDIT is due to several local businessmen for sharing their perceptions of Caroga's economy.

## SUMMARY

1. Caroga is economically dependent upon the Gloversville-Johnstown areas, particularly for employment.
2. Of the local labor force, 93% work within Fulton County.
3. For most Town residents, Caroga is primarily a place of residence separated from their work places and shopping places.
4. Female participation in the labor force has increased from 33% (1960) to 39% (1970), explaining the sharp rise in clerical workers from 12% to 22% over this same time period.
5. On a percentage basis, Government is a significantly more important employer of the Caroga labor force than is common elsewhere in Fulton County.
6. Between 1960 and 1970, operatives declined drastically, as an occupational group, from 36% to 20%.
7. Median income in Caroga is considerably higher than for Fulton County. The largest percentage of Caroga families have incomes of \$10,000.00 to \$14,999.00.
8. No manufacturing operations are located in Caroga.
9. Caroga's primary industry includes tourism and recreation.
10. The major "attractiveness resources" of Caroga are within its natural setting: the mountains, lakes, forests and scenery.
11. Local businesses include lodging facilities, entertainment-recreation facilities, retail outlets and contracting services.
12. The principle market area serviced by the local economy is the Mohawk Valley Region.
13. Modest growth gains are anticipated for the Caroga economy.
14. Economic growth prospects generally include winter recreational development, new types of lodging facilities and new and improved retail outlets.

15. Negative factors affecting the local economy include the short business season, the unavailability of undeveloped shoreline areas and a total dependence of this economy upon the tourist/recreation sector.
16. Positive factors affecting the local economy include the wide variety of recreational activities available, the well-preserved natural setting, the unique rural character of developed areas and the Town's proximity to the urbanized areas of the Mohawk Valley.

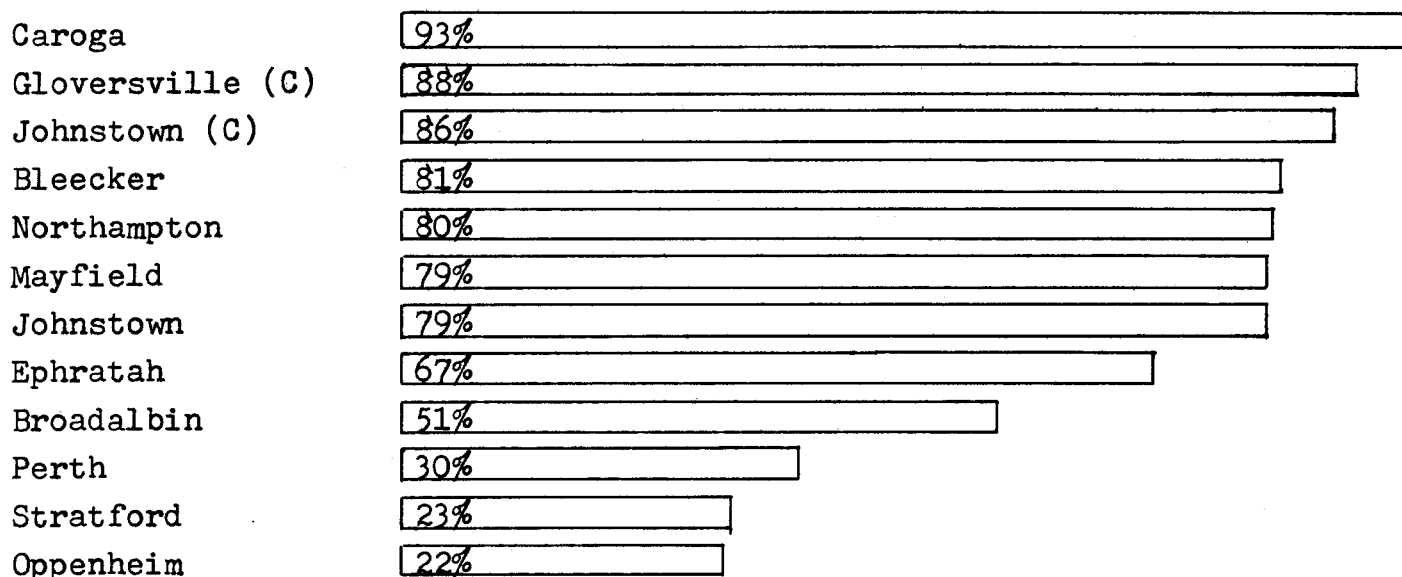
## PLANNING GUIDELINES

1. Efforts to maintain the high quality of Caroga's natural setting are needed to protect the local economic base.
2. The Town Plan should not designate areas for industrial development.
3. The retail industry, although limited by market size, should be encouraged to expand as stores, shops and home crafts.
4. Areas for open space recreation and facilities for travel trailers should be encouraged.

## ORIENTATION

The economic dependence of Caroga is oriented toward the Cities of Gloversville and Johnstown. As of 1970, a higher percentage of Caroga's labor force was employed within Fulton County than any other municipality. Figure 1 illustrates the importance of within County employment to the Caroga labor force.

FIGURE 1  
% WORKING IN FULTON COUNTY  
1970



The economic dependence of Caroga extends beyond employment to include reliance on the Gloversville-Johnstown areas for health services, appliances, automobiles, groceries and banking. The majority of Caroga's labor force works and disposes of their income outside of the boundaries of the Town. Thus, for most Town residents, Caroga is primarily a place of residence separated from their work and shopping places.

## LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS, 1970

In 1970, Caroga's labor force was comprised of 372 persons of which over 90% worked within Fulton County. It is estimated that no more than 10% (or 37 persons) of this local labor force derives full-time employment within the Town of Caroga.

Of females, over 16 years of age, only 33% participated in the labor force in 1960, which increased to 19% in 1970. This 6% climb of female participation partly explains the sharp rise in clerical workers from 12% to 22% over this same time period.

According to the 1970 Census of Population, over 13% of the Fulton County labor force was employed by Government. Yet, Government employment was significantly more important in Caroga, providing a livelihood for over 18% of the labor force. Self-employed workers accounted for 6.5% of the Caroga labor force, whereas almost 9% of the Fulton County labor force was self-employed.

Table 1 lists the percentages in 1960 and 1970 of the Caroga labor force by occupation and the County percentages for 1970.

TABLE 1  
OCCUPATIONAL GROUP PERCENTAGES

<u>Occupational Groups</u>	1960	1970	1970
	<u>Town %</u>	<u>Town %</u>	<u>County %</u>
Professional, Technical Workers	14.5%	10.4%	11.1%
Farmers, Farm Managers	2.4	0.0	1.0
Managers, Administrators	7.2	9.0	7.2
Clerical Workers	12.7	22.8	15.3
Sales Workers	2.4	5.3	5.6
Craftsmen, Foremen	9.6	18.0	13.4
Operative	36.7	19.7	31.7
Private Household Service Workers	0.0	0.0	0.9
Other Service Workers	4.8	9.3	9.3
Laborers (includes farm foremen)	9.6	5.6	4.4
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The changes between 1960 and 1970 are noteworthy for revealing a sharp decline in operative\* and sharp increases in the percentages of clerical workers and craftsmen-foremen. More clerical workers indicates an increase in second incomes and the craftmen-foremen occupations indicate higher incomes than is common in the declining numbers of operatives.

---

\*Operatives include job titles such as meat cutters, mine laborers, glove cutters and welders.

Table 2 identifies the number of workers per industry group according to the 1970 Census:

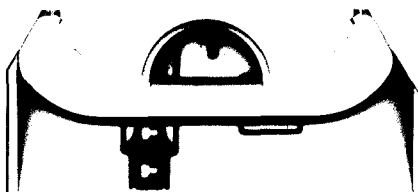
TABLE 2  
EMPLOYED PERSONS 16 YEARS AND OLDER BY  
INDUSTRY GROUP, 1970

<u>Number</u>	<u>Industry Group</u>
40	Textile mill and other fabricated textile products
39	Other non-durable goods
34	Construction
25	Public administration
24	Other personal services
23	Printing, publishing and allied industries
21	Private - elementary and secondary schools and colleges
18	Other retail trade
17	Communications
16	Government - elementary and secondary schools and colleges
10	Other durable goods
10	Utilities and sanitary services
10	Insurance, real estate, other finance
10	Chemical and allied products
8	Trucking service and warehousing
8	Hospitals
7	Repair services
7	Business services
6	Entertainment and recreation
5	Private household
5	Eating and drinking places
5	Fabricated metal industries
4	Wholesale trade
356	TOTAL

## EDUCATION and INCOME, 1970

As of the 1970 Census, Caroga's median family income was \$9,976.00. This median income is considerably higher than the Fulton County median income of \$8,653.00.

When incomes for unrelated individuals (those persons who are not living with relatives and are living in a household either entirely alone or with one or more persons not related to them) are also considered, Caroga's median income drops to \$8,933.00, yet remains significantly



higher than Fulton County's median of \$7,303.00. Unrelated individuals usually fare worse than families in terms of income, as illustrated in the decline of at least \$1,000.00 when the incomes for unrelated individuals are combined with family incomes. Unrelated individuals from Caroga tend to be retirees with comparatively high incomes.

Over 47% of Caroga's family incomes fall in the range of \$10,000.00 to \$25,000.00. Table 3 shows that the percentage of families in the \$10,000.00 to \$14,999.00 income group is much higher in Caroga than in Fulton County or Upstate New York.

TABLE 3  
PERCENTAGE OF ALL FAMILIES  
BY INCOME GROUPS, 1970

	<u>Caroga</u>	<u>Fulton County</u>	<u>Upstate New York</u>
Under \$3,000	6.3	8.8	7.4
3,000- 4,999	6.8	12.0	8.1
5,000- 6,999	13.5	15.4	11.2
7,000- 9,999	23.7	27.4	21.8
10,000-14,999	36.7	25.2	30.1
15,000-24,999	11.1	10.4	17.3
25,000+	1.9	2.6	4.1

According to the 1970 Census, only 5.8% of Caroga's families are below the poverty level. When compared to all other Fulton County municipalities, Caroga has the smallest percentage of families below poverty.

Of the total population, over 25 years old, more than 28% had less than a ninth grade education. However, 59% of this age group completed between one and four years of high school and 13% completed at least one year of college. In all educational categories, the percent of over 25 year olds compares closely with the percentages for Fulton County. The levels of educational attainment for males and females is summarized in the following table:

Table 4  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR MALES AND FEMALES  
OVER 25 YEARS OF AGE, 1970

<u>Level</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	
			<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
0-8 years	77	50	127	28%
1-4 years High School	147	127	274	59%
1+ years College	19	40	59	13%
			460	100%



# THE LOCAL ECONOMY

To speak the unspeakable, what would happen to Caroga's local economy if the estimated 6,500\* summer residents and tourists stopped coming? Among other things, one could expect property values to decline, family incomes to decline and a closing of several local businesses, which are currently supported by the seasonal population influx.

The basis for Caroga's seasonal activities that attract large volumes of users are both natural and man-made. Property owners identified the natural endowments, including the mountains, lakes, forests and scenery as the most important "attractiveness resources"\*\*\* of the community. The protection of these resources is a vital concern of local residents and of local government.

Man-made resources, which also attract consumers, include entertainment and historical factors. Both of these factors are complemented by Caroga's natural surroundings.

The largest full-time employers of Caroga residents are the school system and town government. The Wheelerville School System employs a total of 28 persons, of which 15 are Caroga residents. The Town government employs a total of 9 full-time persons, all of whom are Town residents.

Privately-owned local businesses tend to be family owned, long established and conduct the largest portion of their business during the summer months. The largest seasonal employer is Sherman's Amusement Park.

Local businesses generally are categorized into the following groups:

## Lodging Facilities\*\*\*

Four Seasons Hotel  
Iron Kettle Motel  
Lakeside Motel  
Motel Lodge  
Pine Lake Campground (90 sites)  
Vrooman's Hotel

---

\*Population and Housing Analysis, Town of Caroga, July 7, 1976. p. 13.

\*\*1975 Survey Report, Town of Caroga, August 13, 1975. p. D-18.

\*\*\*Public Lodging Facilities include the New York State Campsites (160 sites).

## Entertainment - Recreation Facilities

Four Seasons Hotel  
Lakeaire (closed)  
Maple Tree Knoll Restaurant  
Motel Lodge  
Nick Stoner Inn Restaurant  
Pine Lake Amusement Park  
Pine Lake Lodge  
Pine Lake Tavern  
Pinnacle Restaurant  
Sherman's Amusement Park  
The Jammer  
The Outlet Restaurant  
Danny's Two Tavern (closed)  
Vrooman's Tavern  
Royal Mountain Ski Area  
Unger House Restaurant

## Retail Outlets

C & B Electronics  
Canada Lake Store  
Candle Shop  
Caroga Curl Beauty Parlor  
Chuckwagon Snack Shop  
Clayt's Gas Station  
Coffee Shop & Deerpatch Boutique  
Danise's Grocery  
Joe's Barber Shop  
Laundromat  
Morris' Fooderama  
Pottery Shop  
The Tree Gift Shop  
Welsh & Grey Lumber Company  
Whispering Pines Mobile Home Sales  
Willy's Snack Shop  
Yates Grocery

## Contracting Services

Several Caroga residents are self-employed in the categories of excavating, carpentry, TV repair and exterminating.

The entertainment and recreation facilities are the major man-made attractions in Caroga. These areas, including the Town-owned golf course, when considered in the context of the natural beauty of the lakes, mountains and forests explains the prosperity of the seasonal economy of Caroga.

The principal market area serviced by the Caroga economy is considered to be the Mohawk Valley and other neighboring counties. These areas represent a total population in excess of one-half million people.\* Advertising within this market is conducted individually by the amusement park and restaurant owners. Cooperative efforts in establishing a clear and visible image of the assets of Caroga are needed. A well-designed advertising campaign should stress the diversity of recreational activities within the beautiful wilderness setting of the Adirondacks.

Caroga's recreationally oriented economy competes, within the same general market area, with the Old Forge, Speculator-Wells and Great Sacandaga Lake areas. The Old Forge area depends, more so than Caroga, on the Utica and Syracuse markets and has greatly expanded into winter recreational development. The Speculator-Wells areas draw from the Mohawk Valley region, have fewer day use only visitors than Caroga and has expanded somewhat into the winter recreational market. The Great Sacandaga Lake region is geographically more diverse and draws from the Amsterdam, Schenectady and Albany areas.

The information gathered in interviews with local business operators and others indicates that the tourist-recreation economy of Caroga will, at least, maintain its present level of business. Modest growth gains are generally anticipated as leisure-time and disposable income increase. This conclusion is based upon the following negative and positive considerations:

Negative

1. The Caroga economy lacks diversification beyond the tourist/recreational area. Related factors include poor locational incentives for industry; such as, the unavailability of public water or sewer, distance from suppliers and buyers and an insufficient labor force. Other related factors include the limited number of year-round residents to support any retail function beyond goods and services directly related to immediate family consumption.

\*The population totals of Fulton, Montgomery, Hamilton, Herkimer, Oneida and Schenectady Counties was 614,982 persons according to the 1970 Census.

2. The expansion of the tourist/recreation economy of Caroga is limited by the lack of undeveloped, private shoreline property. New lodging facilities or recreational areas are more attractive if developed on a lake shore.
3. The prime business season (summer) is short, thus discouraging large capital investments required to start or expand certain businesses.

#### Positive

1. Caroga's recreation/tourist based economy is varied, including amusement parks, swimming, golfing, hiking, fishing, skiing, snowmobiling and boating.
2. Caroga's natural setting of lakes, mountains, clean air, and forests have continued to attract vacationers.
3. Caroga has a unique rural character. Development is concentrated around the lake and surrounded by wilderness. Over-commercialization resulting from neon signs, flashing lights and billboards are non-existent.
4. Proximity to the more urbanized areas of the Mohawk Valley provides an excellent day use area within a short driving distance.

## PROSPECTS FOR GROWTH

Economic growth prospects within Caroga generally include winter recreational development, new types of lodging facilities and new and improved retail outlets. Opinion survey results, from more than one-third of Caroga's property owners, indicate general support for the three uses listed above. Appendix A, of this report, is a reprint revealing the opinions of permanent and seasonal residents on the following economic development issues: open space recreation areas, amusement parks, tourist/ lodging facilities, stores, shops, home crafts and light industry.

Growth in the retail industry is limited by the small size of the year-round population and the short summer season. Nonetheless, the summer tourists provide a potential source of income, which is not being fully exploited. Methods of tapping this market, without jeopardizing the character of the Town, should be investigated. Several retail outlets for crafts and gifts already exist. Room for additional craft shops exists, particularly those which produce their own wares at the retail outlet itself (preferably home occupations). Since leather and wood are abundant local materials, the production and sales of items such as snow shoes, pack frames, furniture, sportswear and other items are prospects for retail growth.

Potential exists for expanding into winter recreational activities including ice skating, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. The abundance of snow, cool temperatures and old logging roads on State and private lands are resources forming a base for winter recreational development. Since overnight stays generate substantially more spending than day use alone, winter recreational development should be complemented by additional lodging facilities.

A travel trailer park in Caroga would fulfill a need currently un-met. The Caroga Lake Public Campsite is limited by a two-week stay period and limited services for travel trailers. With the vast increase in travel trailers and recreational vehicles, Caroga is currently unable to serve or attract this group. A well-designed travel trailer park, with good access to a lake and other recreational facilities, appears feasible.

Prospects for commercial/recreational facilities, such as tennis courts, picnic facilities and a native museum, are worthy of investigation. Auxiliary recreational facilities to serve the summer population influx, particularly in close proximity to the State Campsite, would complement the existing tourist/recreational economy.

APPENDIX A  
 REPRINT FROM THE 1975 SURVEY REPORT, TOWN of CAROGA,  
 AUGUST 13, 1975, pp A8-A9.

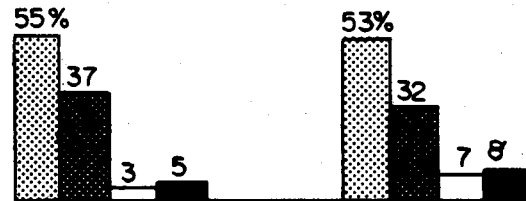
PREFERENCE FOR:

PERMANENT  
RESIDENTS

SEASONAL  
RESIDENTS

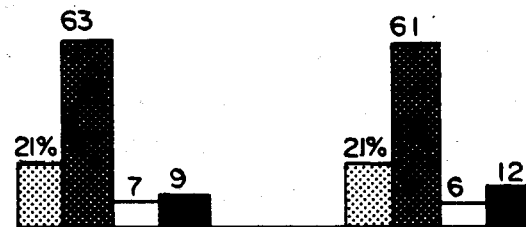
18. Open space recreations areas?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- No response



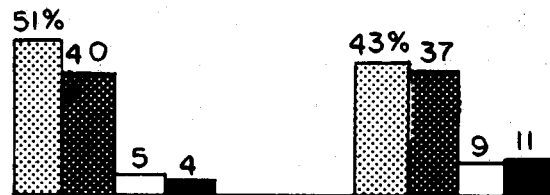
19. Amusement Park Facilities:

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- No response



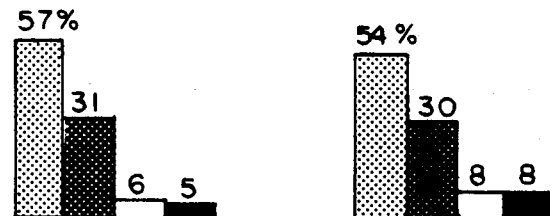
20. Tourist-lodging facilities:

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- No response



21. Stores, shops, home crafts:

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- No response



22. Light industry:

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- No response

