

— Frequently Asked Questions: —

When was the Peden Barn built?

Around 1833

How long did it stand?

The first log barn burned and was replaced by the 1857 barn. Photographs from the 1950s show the upper portion of the barn remaining. The house burned down sometime in the early 1900s.

Who lived here throughout the years?

The Peden families occupied this land from around 1833 until the 1870s.

Did the Pedens have children?

Yes; however, the Peden and McCormick family trees have more than one version.

What were the main products they grew and raised?

Wheat & sheep.

Was there serious illness at the farm?

Yes, in 1854 all of the community was hit by smallpox. Several family members died.

Are there Peden descendants living in the area today?

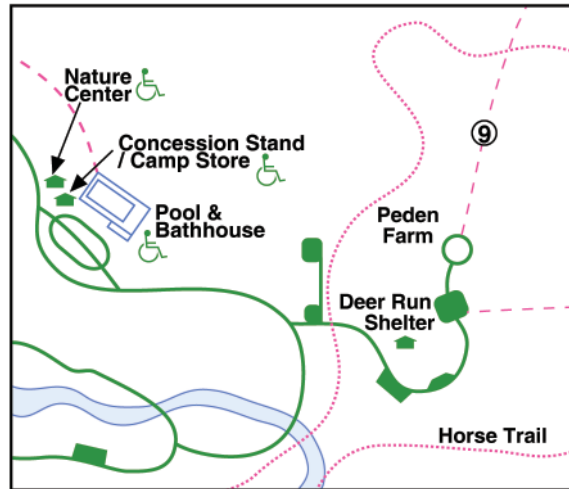
Yes. The descendants have left Owen County and now reside in Monroe and Morgan counties. Some are still farming today.

— GPS Coordinates —

Barn: N 39.29361 W 086.71143

Spring House: N 39.29417 W 086.71127

Home Site: N 39.29433 W 086.71122



McCormick's Creek State Park
250 McCormick's Creek Park Road
Spencer, IN 47460
(812) 829-2235



Welcome to the Peden Farm



Photo by William Overlease

The Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park



Drawing by Ken Bucklew

Supporting Indiana's oldest state park

*Just off Trail 9 are the remnants
of a once prosperous farm owned
by John McCormick's daughter and her
family. Walk quietly past these remains and
listen carefully; they have the ability to tell a
story of this land and its people, both
today and in the past.*

Photo above: The Peden Barn in the 1950s

History

On Sept. 20, 1816, John McCormick, a Scotch-Irish immigrant, purchased 452 acres of land that now make up a portion of McCormick's Creek State Park. His daughter Nancy and her husband Jesse Peden took ownership of the land that is now known as the Peden Farm. The acreage owned and farmed was substantial for its time, even for the 17 horses and mules that worked it. Although historic records disagree as to the actual size of the farm, compared to other family farms in the community at the time, this one was big. The area once occupied by the farm is now the Nature Center, Redbud Shelter and the Deer Run Shelter area.

Buildings

Barn

The foundations that can be seen today are actually from the second barn built by the Pedens. The original log barn, destroyed by fire, was rebuilt in 1857 using hickory timbers 64 feet in length. Stonework for the new barn was done by an English mason using limestone quarried nearby. The floor of the barn had no central support beams, which allowed it to function as a wheat threshing area using a team of 12 horses.

Wheat Threshing Lesson

Threshing means to separate the interior portion of the grain from the outer husk, or bran.



Photo by William Overlease

Photo of the Spring House taken in the 1950s

Spring House

When the Pedens lived here, the springhouse would have been used much as we use a refrigerator today. Cool water running through the bottom of the springhouse kept milk, butter and eggs 20-40 degrees cooler than the outside temperature. Imagine what a cool, dark spot this must have been to visit on a hot, humid summer day.

House

Little is known about the house, which burned down in the early 1900s. No known photographs or written records exist documenting its size or appearance. Today, only the cellar remains of what was once the center of home life on a bustling farm.



Park Lore

Have you heard the story of Wolf Cave? According to one legend, Nancy Peden was returning home from selling butter and eggs to flatboats tied up on the White River. As she walked by the cave, she was pursued by a pack of wolves. In order to divert the wolves, she threw down her gloves and bonnet and was able to make it home safely. Legend has it that Nancy was running to the safe haven of the Peden farm home!



Future

Future knowledge of this place depends in part upon our preservation of what is here now.

The surrounding trees and terrain can spark our imaginations of people in the past. The foundation stones remaining from the structures now provide a foundation for the stories guiding our imagination of life in the farming period.

The future of the Peden Farm at McCormick's Creek will depend in part upon the preservation of the remains.

The Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park will work to ensure that the Peden Farm and its stories are preserved and passed to the future generations of hikers, horseback riders and casual visitors who come across this wonderful place. If you are interested in becoming part of the preservation of the Peden Farm, become a member of the Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park.



Photo by Jill Vance

Friends members remove brush from Peden Farm Area.