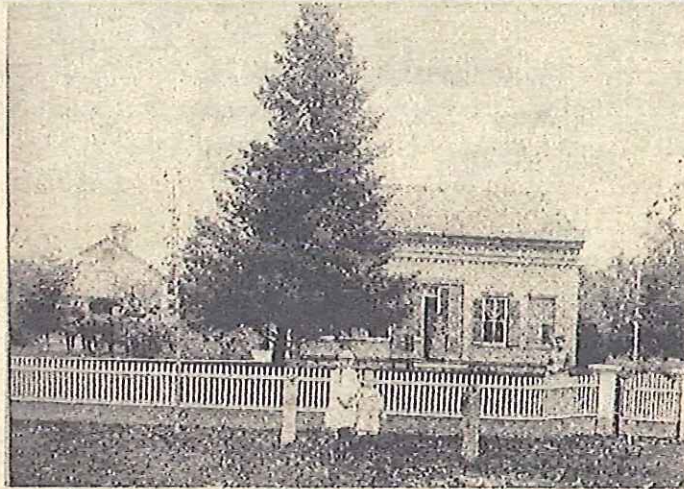


**The McHenry Landmark Commission**  
would like to welcome you to the  
**Historic Petersen Farm**  
4112 McCullom Lake Rd. McHenry, IL



### The Petersen Farm History

In 1842 Page Colby left the stony ridges of Danville, Vermont and headed west to the rich farmlands of Illinois. He set to work at once using \$130 to purchase 80 acres along what would become McCullom Lake Road. The property boasted a grove of Savannah oak trees, which still stand today, and a view of a crystalline little glacial lake to the southwest of Page's land.

He built a farmhouse in the Greek Revival style, which included a distinguishing story and a half, frieze band, door surround, and cornice returns. The original picket fence in the front was built in 1876 and removed in 1945. In 1908 a front porch was added, supported by pillars crafted with McHenry Artificial Stone bases and turned wood.

Page married Mehitabel Elizabeth Smith on October 11, 1843 and brought his bride to her stylish new home. They settled down to the rigorous life of a farm family in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Mehitabel Colby had her main room, or sitting room, a rustic kitchen and a stack stone basement, pretty luxurious for early settlers on the frontier.

As the years passed the family added 800 acres to their homestead, as well as several structures to the property. These included a hay barn, horse barn and grainery, wooden silos, a chicken coop, hog pen and shed. Horses were used to plow on this farm until 1946.

As the family grew with 6 children, the farm grew in acreage, the house grew as well. Over time the second story was finished and divided into bedrooms, and eventually an indoor bathroom was built upstairs.

Other rooms were added to the first floor behind the original main structure of the house. A utility area was devised and an office was created, essential for managing a busy farm.

Maintaining the outbuildings on a farm was always a priority because they housed the animals, feed, precious seed and harvested crops. It was not until almost a century later, in the 1940's that any major renovations took place on the house. At that time a garage and utility room were added and the kitchen was updated.

Although it had grown, the farmhouse had not seen many aesthetic changes in detail. To this day there are still some original elements, such as windows and the front door from 1843.

This farmstead is especially significant to McHenry because five generations of the same family lived here for 159 years, from 1843 until 2002, with the death of Robert Petersen.

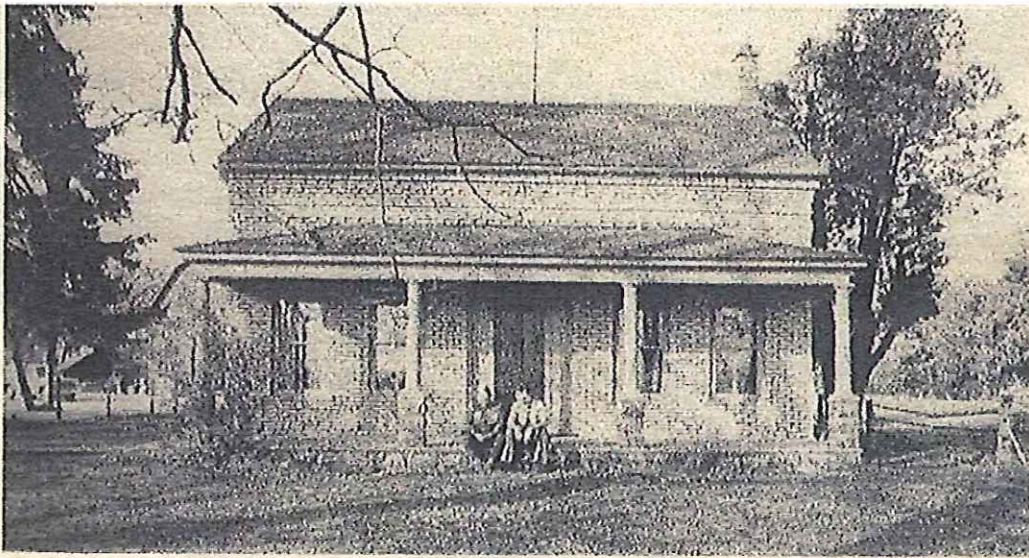
The Petersen Family, descendants of the Colby's, donated land to the City of McHenry, and later the city purchased the remainder of the homestead. Thirteen acres of the farmland extended into the area on the east side of McCullom Lake, and is now known as Petersen Park.



Kenneth Petersen  
Great Grandson of  
Page and Mahitable Colby



Robert Petersen  
Final generation to reside at Petersen Farm

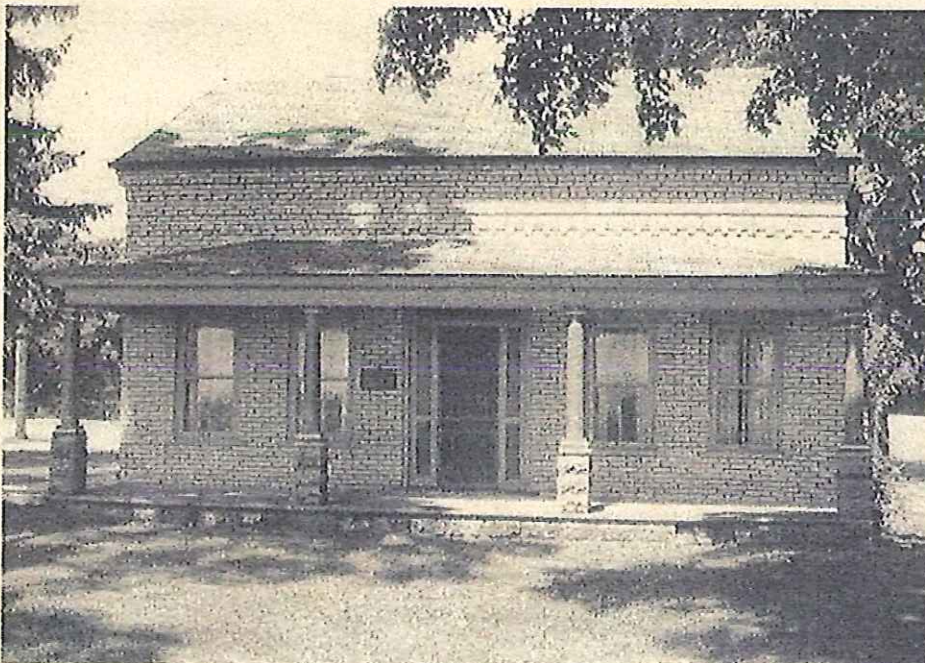


The Petersen Farmhouse at the turn of the 20th century

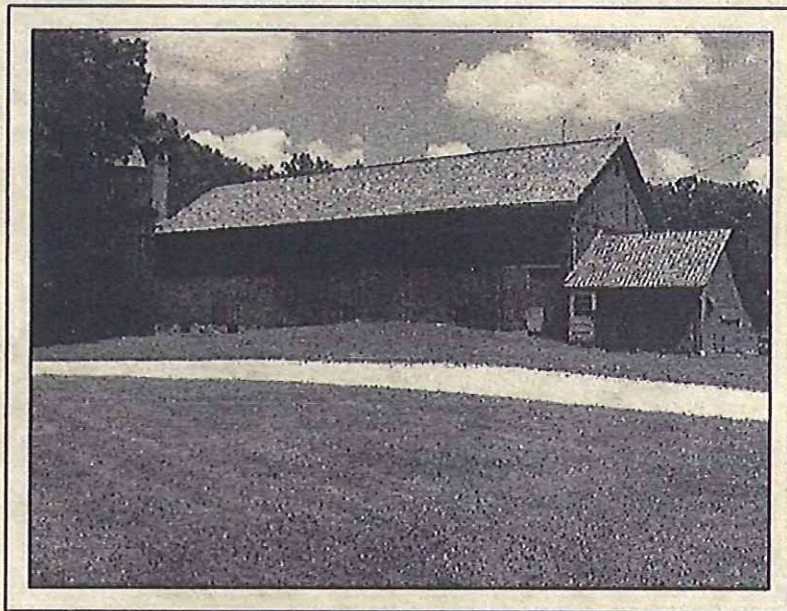
On September 20, 1998 the City of McHenry Landmark Commission bestowed the city's first historic plaque to the Petersen Farmstead.

The Landmark Commission continuously works towards restoring the farmstead as a living museum to show what pioneer farm life was like over a century ago in the Midwest.

Its rich cultural heritage is an example of the courage and struggles of the families who were the foundation for so many communities in Illinois. This historic homestead is a powerful legacy for educating the next generation in local farm life and the pioneer spirit.

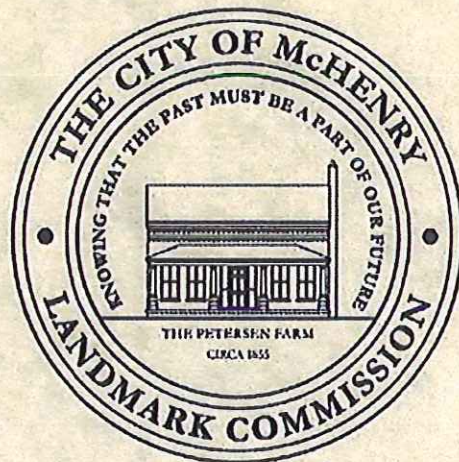


The Petersen Farmhouse as it stands today—2007



Petersen Homestead Barn ~ 2007

The barn that dominates the farmstead was built in two sections. The first with board and batten vertical sides, was perhaps 30' long and built in approximately 1879. Timber framing with motise and tenon construction extends throughout both portions of the barn. The newer portion extends another 50' and continues with the field stone foundation found on the first portion. The milk house is on the east end of the barn and there are two wooden stave silos on the west end. The largest silo dates to 1924 and the smaller to 1946. The horse barn and grainery, closest to the house was built in the 1870's, the second story was used to store hay.



Visit the McHenry Landmark Commission on the city website:

[www.ci.mchenry.il.us](http://www.ci.mchenry.il.us)

for general information and upcoming events