

TALKING POINTS

The Ivy Creek Foundation is a non-profit organization that created and maintains the trails as well as presenting educational programs to thousands of people each year. We have public programs for children as well as adults. If you like the work we do please become a Friend of Ivy Creek or make a donation so we can continue our work. Without the Foundation there would be no barn here today.

Please sign in. Add contact information if you would like more information about upcoming events or how you can become involved.

This barn is the centerpiece of the Carr-Greer family heritage. What is now Ivy Creek Natural Area began as River View Farm. Today ICNA contains 219 acres. The farm grew from a parcel of land that Hugh Carr bought in 1870, five years after he was emancipated. He continued adding to the first land purchase throughout his life.

Hugh Carr and his wife, Texie Mae Hawkins, had six daughters and one son. Texie Mae died in 1899 when her children were young. Hugh Carr, helped by their eldest daughter, Mary Louise, raised the children.

Although Hugh Carr could not read or write, he made sure all of his children went to school. Their eldest, Mary Louise, and four of her sisters earned advanced degrees of education.

Mary Louise Carr married Conly Greer in 1913, and they moved in with her father who was nearly 70 and unwell. Hugh Carr died in 1914.

In 1918, Conly Greer was hired as the first African American extension agent in the county. He had received advanced training in agriculture from Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute in Petersburg, now Virginia State University, where he had met Mary Carr. At this time Extension Services were segregated. White agents worked with white farmers, and African American agents worked with African American farmers.

Conly Greer built this barn in the late 1930s to replace Hugh Carr's original barn. The new barn used wood milled with a portable sawmill from trees on the property.

When Conly Greer built the barn, he incorporated the most progressive ideas of the time. The concrete floor is original and made it easier to keep the barn clean. Cows were milked here according to strict sanitary conditions. Greer sold separated cream to the Monticello Dairy in Charlottesville. The trench by the milking stanchions was used to collect waste.

The barn did not house pigs during Conly Greer's time. Instead, he kept pigs downhill from the barn. After Conly Greer's death, his widow, Mary Carr Greer, rented the barn to a farmer who raised specialty pigs. The benches in the pigsty prevented accidental suffocation or injury of piglets by the sow. The small "door" covers an opening that was used to shovel waste out of the pig area and was not part of the original barn design.

The barn did not originally have stairs. Access to the hayloft was by the boards nailed to the walls and through the hay chutes. Hay chutes allowed for hay to be pitched down from above.

The doublewide doors without a center post allowed the farmer to drive a wagon through the length of the barn.

A system of hayfork, pulleys, rails, and overhead carriage in the hayloft allowed for gathering and storage of hay through the entire upper level.

The granary was lined with galvanized metal to keep out rodents. It was divided into two sections, one for small grain, such as sorghum and barley, and the other part for corn.

Greer would have used implements like those in the barn to farm his fields. He did own a tractor before his death, but during most of his farming years, the work would have been done here with teams of horses, who were housed in stalls in the barn.

The chicken house was across from the family cemetery.