

200638

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
ELLWOOD HOUSE

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Same

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
509 North First Street

CITY OR TOWN:
De Kalb,

STATE Illinois	CODE	COUNTY: De Kalb	CODE
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
De Kalb Park District

STREET AND NUMBER:
150 East Lincoln Highway

CITY OR TOWN:
De Kalb

STATE: Illinois	CODE
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
De Kalb County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
State and Main Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Sycamore

STATE: Illinois	CODE
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 986

CITY OR TOWN:
Carbondale,

STATE: Illinois	CODE
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

See separate sheets

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1879 and 1910

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See Separate sheets

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biographical Record of De Kalb County, Illinois. Chicago: S.J. Clarke. 1898.
 Harriet W. Davy. From Oxen to Jets, A History of De Kalb Co., 1835-1963.
 De Kalb County Board of Supervisors. 1965.
 Lewis M. Gross. Past and Present of De Kalb County. Chicago: Pioneer Pub. 1907.
 Henry and Frances McCallum. The Wire that Fenced the West. Norman, Okla:
 Univ of Okla. Press. 1965.
 Joseph McFadden. From Invention to Monopoly: the History of the Consolidation
 of the Barbed Wire Industry, 1873-1899. Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation,
 Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois. 1968.
 University Archives, Northern Illinois University. De Kalb, Illinois.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		0	'	"
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "		0	'	"
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "		0	'	"
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "		0	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 8.19

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Theo Hild

ORGANIZATION: Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey DATE: 20 Feb 1975

STREET AND NUMBER: 839 1/2 North Eleventh Street

CITY OR TOWN: De Kalb STATE: Illinois CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. Description

The Ellwood House property contains several buildings built between 1879 and 1910. There were originally nine ~~buildings~~ structures associated with the property, five of which remain: the house, the carriage house, the museum, the water tower, and the little house.

HOUSE

Isaac Ellwood had his new home constructed in 1879 at a cost of \$50,000. At the time it was the largest and finest home in DeKalb. In 1899 he ordered some alteration of the facade. When his son, E. Perry Ellwood, moved into the house after his father's death in 1910, he ordered further, much more extensive alterations for the entire structure.

The brick house is three stories plus a full, elevated basement. The mansard roof has steeply pitched gable dormers, rather plain corbelled chimneys, and iron gillwork surrounding the top. Upon its completion the house had a slate roof. The dormers had some ornamentation with tall finials. The windows were all double hung and of fairly regular size, occurring singly or in pairs with a variety of lintel shapes. The main entrance on the front (east) side was a one story portico of stone supported by two pilasters and two polished granite columns attached to a square projecting bay. A dozen stone steps descended to the ground. The southeast corner of the house had a square tower projecting at forty-five degrees the same height as the rest of the building. The original driveway lay along the south side of the house with an entrance in and rear and side.

In 1899 Isaac Ellwood had the bracketed cornices replaced on three side by a classical cornice with small dentils and simple projecting moulding. Similar moulding covered the lintels over many of the windows. The two first floor windows of the tower on the southeast corner were replaced by one large window. The portion of the projecting bay over the east portico was removed and made flush with the front wall. The spaces between the columns and pilasters was filled with brick to create a vestibule. The windows over the portico were replaced with a double door surrounded by four pilasters and a heavy architrave. These doors opened onto the roof of a veranda which was built over the entire front of the house and included the port cochere newly built at the south end. The veranda had a wood railing with a semi-circular projection in the center.

The alterations of 1899 were superficial, but the changes made by E. Perry Ellwood in 1910 added rooms and changed the shape of others. The exterior alterations made in 1910 included moving the porte cochere from the south to the north end of the veranda, adding a large brick veranda to the south side, removing the conservatory from the southwest corner and building a new one in the rear, and removing completely the square tower from the southeast corner.

The general floor plan of the home has remained the same since it was built: all rooms on every floor are entered from a central hall which terminates at the rotunda in the rear. In 1910 the following interior changes were made: the wall between the family room and sitting room was removed to create the large living room. The Caen stone fireplace was retained and a vaulted ceiling added in the living room; the parlor was converted into the library; the library was extended to become the dining room; and a large kitchen added on the northwest corner. The second floor room above the kitchen became servant's quarters.

7. Description, continued

HOUSE, continued

Today the exterior appears as it did in 1910 with the exception of a shingle roof replacing the slate. The interior is maintained as a museum and contains much of the original Ellwood furniture, including carpets. The museum attempts to represent the house as it appeared around 1910. The original architect of 1879 was George O. Garnsey of Chicago. The 1910 remodelling was done by the Chicago firm of Perkins, Fellows, and Hamilton. The interior decorator was George Terwilliger of Marshall Field's. The fireplace mantel was carved by Joseph Dux, also of Chicago.

WATER TOWER

Lying to the west of the house is the circular limestone water tower rising about 50 feet and about 18 feet in diameter. The windows occur singly at various levels and are three-piece limestone segmental arches with keystones. The sheet metal roof is flat.

When it was built in 1879 the top quarter of the tower was a wooden water tank with a conical roof. Between 1897 and 1910 the wooden water tank was removed and replaced with about 30 additional courses of limestone in the same manner and same material as the original part of the structure. The arched doorway at the base was replaced with a larger, square double door. The roof was still conical and made of wood. Around 1950 this second roof was replaced by the present sheet metal cap.

CARRIAGE HOUSE

Although commonly called the Carriage house this building was never used for carriages, but for automobiles. Built between 1908 and 1910, this one story stucco, mansarded building now houses antique carriages donated to the museum. The upper floor was, and is, used for storage.

MUSEUM HOUSE

The plain, one story red brick museum house was built in 1905 to accommodate the antiques and curiosities Mrs. Isaac Ellwood acquired in her extensive travels around the world. The building measures about 25 feet on each side and has a doorway in the center of the north and east sides. Some of the original oak display cases are still intact. Preservation work is in progress.

LITTLE HOUSE

The little house is a miniaturized stick style house made of wood and painted white. It measures 13 x 15 feet and stands about 14 feet high. It rests upon a concrete foundation. It has a new cedar roof that is an exact duplication of the original.

7. Description, continued

LITTLE HOUSE, continued

In 1892 all of the carpenters in De Kalb participated in the construction of the house which was to be used a float in a local parade. When the parade was over another son of Isaac Ellwood, Will Ellwood, bought the house and had it set on a brick foundation on the Ellwood property in the same location where it is today. Between that time and 1973 the house was moved around town by four or five subsequent owners. The last owner donated the little house to the Ellwood House Association. Early photographs indicate the little house was not white, but of two other colors. When those colors are determined it will be repainted.

8. Significance

Isaac Leonard Ellwood was born in New York state in 1833. For several years he was employed as a clerk and a teamster on the Erie Canal. In 1851 he traveled to California to make his fortune in the gold fields. Failing that he left for De Kalb, Illinois in 1855 and entered the hardware business with his brothers. By the early 1870's he was a successful merchant and with the financial backing of his father-in-law he also became involved in real estate and the breeding of Percheron horses.

In 1873, Joseph Glidden, also of De Kalb and an old friend of Ellwood's, invented barbed wire. Recognizing the need for such a device for fencing the vast, treeless areas of the West, Ellwood was immediately taken with the potential of Glidden's invention. Late in 1873 he formed a partnership with Glidden for the manufacture of barbed wire. As the demand for the wire began to grow the Ellwood-Glidden company built the world's first barbed wire factory in De Kalb in 1875 and De Kalb became the chief center of its production. Soon the large firm of Washburn and Moen of Worcester, Massachusetts, manufacturers of the plain wire required for producing barbed wire, took an interest in the Ellwood-Glidden product. In 1876 Glidden sold his interest to Washburn and Moen and Isaac Ellwood became the chief executive. In the late 1880's Ellwood took over the production of barbed wire altogether with the I.L. Ellwood Manufacturing Company.

In the meantime, John W. (Bet-a-Million) Gates, who began his business career as a salesman for the Ellwood-Washburn and Moen company, had been busy consolidating the barbed wire industry by combining most of the small competitors into the Consolidated Steel and Wire Company. In 1899, after several years of industrial warfare, licensing disputes, and legal battles, between themselves and other competitors (the largest and most obstreperous being Jacob Haish, also of De Kalb) Gates and Ellwood combined to form the American Steel and Wire Company which soon had a virtual monopoly of the production and sales of barbed wire.

Between the time of his retirement from the barbed wire industry and his death in 1910, Ellwood served on the staff of Illinois Governor John Tanner and later served as Railway and Warehouse Commissioner. When he was not in the service of the State he led the life of retired gentleman in De Kalb where he exhibited a great interest in civic affairs, as he had always done. One of his greatest contributions to the community was his role in securing De Kalb as the site for the state normal college, which is now Northern Illinois University.

Some authorities have given Ellwood part of the credit for the invention of barbed wire, but as Joseph Glidden's design and patent was the earliest, Ellwood's contribution to the initial invention is at best vague. However, there is no disputing the fact that Ellwood's greatest contribution was the organization of the barbed wire industry which was of critical importance in the development of the agriculture of the Trans-Mississippi West. Ellwood made his influence felt further through his association with John Gates and J. P. Morgan. Morgan used Gates a great deal in helping him bring together the United States Steel Corporation. Through Gates, Morgan met Ellwood and relied upon his opinions and knowledge of the wire industry to advance further the monopolization of the steel industry.

Throughout his career in the manufacture of barbed wire Ellwood made his home in De Kalb. In 1964, his ~~family~~ donated the home and property to the city for use as a museum and park. Today the house serves as a monument to the barbed wire industry and Isaac Ellwood's contributions to De Kalb and the nation.