

= John Deere House and Shop =

The John Deere House and Shop is located in the unincorporated village of Grand Detour , Illinois , near the Lee County city of Dixon . The site is known as the location where the first steel plow was invented by John Deere in 1837 . The site includes Deere 's house , a replica of his original blacksmith shop , a gift shop , and an archaeological exhibit showing the excavation site of his original blacksmith shop . The Deere House and Shop is listed on the National Register of Historic Places ; it joined that list in 1966 , the year the Register was established . Prior to that , it was designated a National Historic Landmark on July 19 , 1964 .

= = History = =

In 1836 , native Vermonter John Deere set out from Rutland , Vermont to Grand Detour , Illinois , founded by his friend and fellow Vermont native Leonard Andrus . The town lacked a local blacksmith , Deere 's trade , and within two days Deere had a forge and new business established . In Vermont , Deere produced plows made from cast @-@ iron and when he first arrived in Illinois he produced the same plows . Soil conditions in Illinois differ from those in Vermont . In Vermont the soil is sandy and falls easily away from the plow blade but in Illinois the soil is thicker and wetter ; it stuck to the plow and had to be scraped off by the farmer as he plowed .

There are varying tales as to the inspiration for Deere to create the invention he is famed for , the steel plow . In one version he recalled the way the polished steel pitchfork tines moved through hay and soil and thought that the same effect could be obtained for a plow . By early 1838 , Deere completed his first steel plow and sold it to a local farmer , Lewis Crandall . Crandall spread word of his success with Deere 's plow quickly , and two neighbors soon placed orders with Deere . By 1841 he was manufacturing 75 plows per year , and 100 plows per year in 1876 .

= = John Deere Historic Site = =

The John Deere Historic Site in Grand Detour , Illinois is operated by the John Deere Company and has five components . Outside of the perimeter , which is surrounded by a white , wooden fence , are 2 acres (0 @. @ 81 ha) of prairie restoration . Inside of the fenced area is the replica blacksmith shop , the John Deere House and the visitor 's center which is a gift shop . Also on the grounds is a building which houses the 1960s archaeological dig site . The blacksmith shop is a replica of the original Deere Shop , unearthed during the 1960s dig . The shop recreates Deere 's shop and includes a demonstration by a modern blacksmith using antique tools of the trade and an open furnace . The visitor 's center is inside an 1843 home built by a Deere neighbor , it houses a gift shop which has an original Deere family wall clock on display . The home was originally owned by William Dana . The house is furnished with period items as well as the gift shop 's merchandise . The entire site is operated by John Deere Company employees .

Part of the John Deere Historic Site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places along with being designated a National Historic Landmark . The only contributing property on the National Register listing for the site is the John Deere House . The house is also the only " property type " listed on the National Historic Landmarks ' online database entry for the site . The house obtained National Historic Landmark status on July 19 , 1964 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places soon after its inception on October 15 , 1966 .

= = House = =

The John Deere House was built in 1836 when Deere arrived in Grand Detour and the building was added onto as his family grew . It is furnished with period furniture and household objects that would have been common around the time the Deere family occupied the home . The house has two levels with four rooms on the main level and two rooms upstairs . Each of the upstairs rooms is accessible via a private staircase and it is believed one of the rooms was used by Deere 's

apprentices while the other was used as a children 's bedroom .

The front entry leads into the living room where polished wood is found throughout as well as 19th century furnishings . The front room is part of the original building which consisted of one room . The room acted as the Deere 's kitchen , living room , bedrooms , essentially everything . Deere eventually added onto the house , including a bedroom and an upstairs loft . The first floor bedroom would have been used for John and his wife , and possibly a couple of the children while the upstairs room would be used for the rest of the children . The Deeres left the home in 1847 when they moved to Moline , Illinois .

= = Shop = =

The original blacksmith shop on the site is long gone , however , in 1962 an archaeological team made of students from the University of Illinois approached the Deere Company about excavating the site where the shop once stood . The team unearthed the location of the original Deere Blacksmith Shop where the first successful steel plow was developed in 1837 . The dig site is preserved beneath a building , known as the pavilion . The site is surrounded by museum exhibits which include artifacts , news clippings , and photographs .

A blacksmith shop does occupy the current John Deere Historic Site grounds . Archaeologists used a magnetometer to locate the position of the forge in the original blacksmith shop , thus , the current shop shares an interior which is an exact replica of the original . The exterior of the building has the same dimensions as the original as well .

= = Historic significance = =

The John Deere House and Shop is historically significant for its influence in the areas of commerce , agriculture , industry , and invention . The site was designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark on July 19 , 1964 . The Landmark designation was assigned by the U.S. Department of Interior because of the House and Shop 's association with John Deere , founder of the John Deere Company and inventor of the first steel plow . His invention was of significance to the entire United States and made large scale cultivation of areas in Illinois , Indiana and Ohio possible . When the U.S. National Register of Historic Places was established in 1966 the John Deere House and Shop was among the first properties to join that list . It was added to the National Register on October 15 , 1966 , the same day the National Register was established .