

= Joseph F. Glidden House =

The Joseph F. Glidden House is located in the United States in the DeKalb County , Illinois city of DeKalb . It was the home to the famed inventor of barbed wire Joseph Glidden . The barn , still located on the property near several commercial buildings , is said to be where Glidden perfected his improved version of barbed wire which would eventually transform him into a successful entrepreneur . The Glidden House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 . The home was designed by another barbed wire patent holder in DeKalb , Jacob Haish .

The property contains the house and two outbuildings ; the barn and the remains of an old windmill foundation . Constructed in 1861 , the Glidden House adheres mostly to a French Colonial style of architecture . The raised basement and full @-@ length porch are two of the architectural elements found on the Glidden House that are consistently found in French Colonial homes . The barn , a building of high historical significance , was not included as part of the National Register listing for the property until 2002 , nearly 30 years after the original nomination was approved .

= = House = =

The land that the Glidden House stands on is what remains of Joseph Glidden 's once large DeKalb County farm . His holdings stretched along Lincoln Highway , both the north and south sides , from the Kishwaukee River in the east to present @-@ day Annie Glidden Road on the west . The Glidden Farm went as far north as today 's Lucinda Avenue . The farm 's south border , near where Glidden would grant the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad right @-@ of @-@ way through DeKalb in the early 1990s was near present @-@ day Taylor Street .

The two @-@ story Joseph F. Glidden House is constructed from locally fired brick , which is relatively soft . The softness of the brick has caused it to weather in a non @-@ uniform fashion . The brick is said to have been fired at a small brickyard which once existed on the Kishwaukee River in DeKalb , near the present @-@ day Lincoln Highway bridge . The home stands on a stone foundation and was designed by local carpenter and eventual barbed wire competitor to Glidden , Jacob Haish . Construction was completed in 1861 and the home is a prominent example of Illinois French Colonial architecture .

= = = History = = =

The land where the Glidden House stands once held a log structure , which Glidden lived in when he first came to DeKalb at the beckoning of his cousin Russell Huntley . The house was built in 1861 for barbed wire entrepreneur Joseph Farwell Glidden . As his personal residence , the house , and its accompanying barn , were closely associated with his invention , really just an improvement , of barbed wire . Glidden 's improvement upon a wire board fence developed by Henry Rose was of vast importance in the settlement of the United States west of the Mississippi . It was after Glidden saw Rose exhibit his wire at a fair in 1873 that he was struck with the idea of attaching barbs to wire strand fencing . Glidden is said to have experimented with some of his ideas in the basement kitchen of the Glidden House . He noticed that whenever he tried to attach barbs directly to strands of wire they slid along the length of the wire ; Glidden realized he needed a way to crimp the barbs . He began tinkering around the home 's kitchen . Glidden fit two hair pins to the shaft of a coffee mill , one centered and the other off @-@ center . He found that by placing the wire between the pins and turning the crank a uniform barb resulted . How to crimp the barbs to the wire was solved , in the barn , by tying one end of the wire and another length of wire to a poplar tree on the grounds of the Glidden House and the other ends of the wires to a grindstone . The grindstone was used to twist the wires together and prevent the barbs from slipping .

Day @-@ to @-@ day life at the Glidden House was mostly carried out in the home 's basement which contained a full kitchen , dining room , and living room . The upper floors were used for guests and for sleeping quarters . In 1877 Glidden 's daughter , Elva , married William H. Bush in the homestead .

As of 2006 extensive restoration work had been completed on the home . The front porch was repaired and restored and inside , the hardwood floors have been replaced and refinished . In addition , the front parlors have been repainted and restored .

== = Architecture == =

The home was mostly designed in a French Colonial style , though it contains some elements of Greek Revival architecture . French Colonial architecture was more popular in the American South than it ever was in the northern tier of states .

== = Exterior == =

The two @-@ story brick structure is supported by a fieldstone foundation and still features its original front porch . The porch spans the length of the building 's front ( south ) facade , at a height of about 6 feet ( 1 @.@ 8 m ) . The porch is supported by four wooden pillars , which rest on stone bases . The stairs leading to the front porch are supported by two similar wooden posts , which , like the house , are set into fieldstone bases . The first step on the stairs was originally a limestone block embedded in the ground . The porch roof is supported by six wooden , bracketed pillars . The pillars are simple , with the brackets coming from the boxed capitals . At the rear of the porch wooden pilasters set at each end help to support the roof . Differentiating the home from the traditional French Colonial design is the porch roof , which is separate from the main roof .

The house stands mostly as it did in 1861 save a few alterations . The front porch was screened in at the time the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places , the screens have since been removed . At the rear of the house a small porch was enclosed . In 1909 or 1910 there were major subtractions and replacements . Removed were a cast @-@ iron widow 's walk along the roof ridge and a large gable dormer , decorated in the same manner as the cornice decorating the roof trim . The present dormer replaced the larger one and is more of a low @-@ shed type .

The roof itself is a low gable and dominated by single stack , straddle ridge chimneys at its east and west ends . The boxed roof trim is a decorated cornice . The low @-@ shed dormer is covered with green asphalt . The old widow 's walk , which a neighbor dubbed Glidden 's " obscuratory " , was balustraded and set just above the dormer .

== = Interior == =

The interior of the building is also similar to how it appeared when the house was constructed . However , a few changes have been made . In 1910 the two marble fireplaces were replaced by brick . The flooring has been replaced as needed . The home 's basement , once the main living area , has since been converted several times for other uses .

On the first floor of the home the rooms remain much the same as they were when Glidden lived in the house . An original multi @-@ paneled wooden door remains at the entry from the porch to the central hall . The door , however , was altered , having glass panels installed to admit more light . The staircase is also original and its newel posts resemble those found in the Isaac and Harriet Ellwood House , another Haish designed home , and the Gurler House , whose architect is unknown though it was quite possibly Haish , both in DeKalb .

On the house 's east side are three rooms , whose original presence is open to debate . The three rooms are interconnected , another common French colonial element . The room adjacent the porch was used as the Glidden 's dining room and is where the large brick fireplace , which replaced the marble one in 1909 , is located . The 1909 fireplace is of the American Craftsman style . At the end of the hall , near the kitchen , there is a full bathroom .

The western part of the first floor is dominated by a large formal living room . The room has two entrances , one at the front of the hall , near the front door and the other at the back end of the hall . This was the room in which Elva Glidden married in the late 19th century . After 1941 the rear part of the living room , or " west " room , was walled off and a second kitchen added . When Jessie

Glidden , the last Glidden to occupy the old homestead , moved in 1998 , the west room was restored to its original size and the second kitchen removed .

The basement , and for part of the home 's history , the main living area , is accessed via a staircase at the back of the first @-@ floor hall . The steep stairs still show years of wear . One of the rooms off the main basement is the kitchen where Glidden is said to have experimented with the coffee grinder and his wife 's hair pins , eventually leading to his brand of barbed wire .

The second @-@ floor served as the main sleeping quarters . It consists of a few simple bedrooms , all historically without closets . The upstairs hall contains a door which once accessed a staircase to the widow 's walk , what remains of the space has been used as a closet for over a century .

#### = = Outbuildings = =

The property has two remaining outbuildings . The barn is where Glidden invented his famous improvement on barbed wire . Dubbed " The Winner , " his barbed wire became the most popular version of the invention . Barbed wire is considered to be one of the most important factors in American progress and settlement .

The other outbuilding on the property along historic Lincoln Highway are the remnants of a once dominating windmill . Though only the foundation remains , it gives a glimpse of how impressive the structure must have once been .

#### = = = Barn = = =

The Glidden Barn , located to the rear and east of the home , was thought to have been added to the National Register of Historic Places when the original nomination for the house was approved in 1973 . However , in the late 1990s , the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency revealed that the nomination included only the house . The Glidden Historical Center initiated the process of adding the barn to the Register . Those moves were approved by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council in 2002 and the barn officially became part of the National Register .

The barn was built sometime around 1871 , possibly even before , and is constructed of the same soft brick that makes up the exterior of the home . Tradition in the Glidden family holds that the barn , like the house itself , was designed and built by prominent local carpenter Jacob Haish . The famous barn , one of DeKalb County 's oldest remaining , stands a full two @-@ stories high , measuring around 50 feet ( 15 m ) tall , with a width of 30 feet ( 9 m ) .

In February 2007 the Glidden Homestead and Historical Center kicked off a fundraising drive . The drive is aimed at raising US \$ 2 million to expand the Joseph F. Glidden House site to include museum space and a media center . Some of the funds will be used to help restore the barn and expand historical center museum space into the building .

#### = = = = Architecture = = = =

The Glidden barn is of pole and beam construction . The second @-@ floor interior is dominated by two large transverse wooden beams . It is of the three @-@ bay , English tradition , the west bay containing a space for a stairwell leading to a hayloft and seven stalls . It is constructed of red brick and stands on a foundation of limestone . Glidden 's barn took full advantage of the term vernacular ; the brick was locally manufactured and the limestone locally quarried .

The east bay of the barn contains an animal stall in its northeast corner and a fully enclosed office in its opposite corner . The second @-@ floor hayloft is supported by the two massive transverse beams . The full @-@ sized loft is accessible via an enclosed staircase against the south wall . The building 's exterior roof is fully supported by the brick walls . The result is a loft which is an entirely open space save for some pole and beam construction supporting the laminated beams , which act as tie rods at the base of the roof . The barn roof is a common gable roof pitched at a 45 degree angle , it was originally covered with wooden shingles , those have been replaced over the years with asphalt .

The barn features extensive windows , somewhat unique outside of dairy barns , with a total of 14 eight @-@ paned , double @-@ hung windows dispersed over three sides of the rectangular structure , north , south and east . On the west side , facing the house , are seven smaller single @-@ pane windows . The double @-@ hung windows are topped with segmented arches constructed from a double row of bricks ; the north and south main entrances are also topped with segmented brick arches , each of three rows of bricks .

= = = Windmill building = = =

Only the foundation remains of the property 's windmill . What is left , ten rows of stone above the ground , is completely invisible when the home is viewed by passers @-@ by on Lincoln Highway . The windmill started to fall into disrepair around the 1930s or 40s . The original , specific use of the windmill is unknown .