

Inventory of the

Ellwood Family
DeKalb, Illinois

Collection

In the

Regional History Center

RC 1

INTRODUCTION

The Ellwood Collection came to Northern Illinois University in October 1965, as a gift from the heirs of the Isaac L. Ellwood Estate. Mrs. Patience Towle added materials to the collection in 1978 as did Professor Earl W. Hayter in 1979.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 12.25
Number of containers: 18 boxes + 3 volumes
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 1

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Ellwood Collection contains three series of records: (1) family papers, (2) wire manufacturing business records, (3) Percheron horse business records.

Series one, family papers, holds published and unpublished histories of the family, genealogical charts and research files, a wide range of legal documents, memorabilia, and personal correspondence of family members. This series provides a detailed record of family relationships and activities, especially during the 1835-1915 period. It is the largest extant collection of Ellwood family documents available to researchers.

The I. L. Ellwood manufacturing business, series two, represent only a small portion of the records which have been preserved: the main body of these documents are in the Western Manuscripts Collection of the University of Wyoming. The records of Ellwood Manufacturing Company's successor, American Steel and Wire Company, have been preserved in Harvard University's Baker Library. Still, the primary documents in this series are important since they document the formation of the wire trust and the litigation between the major parties involved in a struggle for control of the industry (1873-1898).

The third series documents the establishment and operation of Will Ellwood's Percheron draft horse breeding business in DeKalb, 1885-1900. Correspondence, sales records, and catalogs may be found in this series, although much of the correspondence (especially the letterbooks) is badly deteriorated.

Researchers using this collection may wish to see the Center's J. F. Glidden Paper's (RC 6), Joseph McFadden's 1968 N.I.U. doctoral thesis, "From Invention to Monopoly: the History of the Consolidation of the Barbed Wire Industry, 1873-1899," the Earl W. Hayter Papers, and James P. Sczepaniak's "The Formation of the American Steel and Wire Company (N.I.U. MA thesis, 1963). Finally, the Ellwood family donated the mansion and grounds to the City of DeKalb in 1965 for preservation as a historic site and museum. It is open to the public.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Isaac Leonard Ellwood was one of three DeKalb men credited as the original inventors of barbed wire: the others were Joseph Glidden and Jacob Haish. In partnership with Glidden, Ellwood founded the Barb Fence Company in DeKalb, Illinois in 1875. A year earlier Ellwood had purchased a half interest in Glidden's barbed wire patent. When Glidden sold his half-interest in 1876 to the Washburn-Moen Manufacturing Company, Worcester, Massachusetts, Ellwood retained control of production and distribution for the West. After negotiating the removal of Jacob Haish as a rival in 1881, the Ellwood, Washburn-Moen partnership monopolized the industry. The Ellwood Wire and Nail Company was organized as a sister organization and in 1889 I. L. Ellwood reorganized his business as the I. L. Ellwood Manufacturing Company. In 1898 Ellwood sold his barbed wire interests to John W. "Bet-a-Million" Gates who created the new American Steel and Wire Company, now a division of United States Steel.

When I. L. Ellwood first arrived in DeKalb in 1851, he worked on Henry Miller's horse breeding farm in nearby Kingston. Ellwood's eldest son, Will, began his own business as an importer and breeder of Percheron work horses in 1883, and much of the collection described below relates to this enterprise.

For further historical information about the Ellwood family, see Harriet Wilson Davy, editor, From Oxen to Jets: A History of DeKalb County, 1835-1963 (Dixon, Illinois: DeKalb County Board of Supervisors, 1963), pp. 95-100; Henry D. and Frances T. McCallum, The Wire That Fenced the West (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. 29-111.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

American Steel and Wire Company
 Automobiles
 Barbed Wire
 Bridgewater Gas Company
 Carnegie, Andrew, 1835-1919
 Draft horses--Percheron
 Ellwood Wire & Nail
 Ellwood, Isaac L.
 Gary, Elbert
 Gates, John W.
 Gurler Henry B.
 Gurler, Lulu May
 Horses
 Steel Industry
 Washburn-Moen Manufacturing
 World War I

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Series I. Family Papers		
1	1-2	Barbed Wire Histories
	3	“The Ellwoods: Barbed Wire and Ranches”
	4-5	Ellwood Family Genealogies
2	1-16	Mrs. Amon Westman’s Notes: Ellwood Family Genealogy
3	1-19	Mrs. Amon Westman’s Notes: Ellwood Family Genealogy
4	1-6	Mrs. Amon Westman’s Notes: Ellwood Family Genealogy
	7	Ellwood Family Legal Documents, Certificates, Memorials, 1882-1922
	8	Personal Items and Photographs, n.d.
	9	Land Titles, 1888-1896
	10	Tax Bills, 1881
	11	William A. Miller Family Correspondence, 1820-1884
	12	Ellwood Family Correspondence, 1888-1936
	13	I.L. Ellwood, Personal Notes Receivable, 1858-1875
14	I.L. Ellwood, Check Stubs, 1893-1894	
5	1	I.L. Ellwood Correspondence: Establishing N.I.S.N.S. at DeKalb, 1895
	1 volume	I.L. Ellwood Estate Correspondence, 1911-1913
	2	Mrs. I.L. Ellwood Correspondence, 1898-1910
	3	E. Perry Ellwood Correspondence, 1890-1930
	4	Mrs. Henry B. Gurler Correspondence, 1891-1901
	5-6	Lulu May (Gurler) Ellwood Correspondence, 1890-1913
6	1-4	Lulu May (Gurler) Ellwood Correspondence, 1900-1940
	5	Patience Ellwood Correspondence, 1930
	6	John Fisk Ellwood Correspondence, 1933
	7-8	Ellwood House, 1967-1978
Series II. Wire Mfg. Business Records		
7	9	Wire Mfg. Correspondence, 1870-1879
	1-6	Wire Mfg. Correspondence, 1883-1908
	7	Telegrams, 1884-1909
	8	I.L. Ellwood Correspondence, 1884-1904

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	4
	9	I.L. Ellwood Correspondence, Brennard and Gary, 1892-1895	
	10	I.L. Ellwood Correspondence, Bi-By, 1887-1904	
	11	Correspondence, 1904-1917	
	12	Bradstreet Co. Correspondence, 1881-1896	
	13	Cummins and Wright Correspondence, 1891-1893	
	14	R.G. Dun Co. Correspondence, 1886-1895	
	15	J.W. Gates Correspondence, 1887-1900	
	16	Barbed Wire Prices, 1874-1899	
	17	Earnings, Profits, Dividends, 1877-1884	
	18	Sales Ledger, 1879-1882; Cash Drawer Account Book, 1878	
	19-20	Accounting, Financial Statements, 1896-1901	
	21	Ellwood Mfg. Co., By-laws, 1889	
	22	Bldg. Construction and Insurance, 1882-1897	
	23	Wire Improvements, Patents, Correspondence, 1874-1914	
8	1	British Wire Patents, 1876-1879	
	2-3	Washburn-Moen Agreements, 1875-1895	
	4	Stover Agreements, 1878-1885	
	5-8	Agreements and Contracts, 1881-1897	
	9-11	Wire Manufacturers Agreements, Meetings, 1882-1886	
	12	Royalties, 1877-1890	
	13	Notes Payable, Royalty, 1869-1888	
	14	Patents and Litigation, 1879-1901	
	15-18	Litigation Expenses, 1876-1890	
	1 volume	General Ledger, 1885-1890	
9	1	Abram Ellwood Mfg. Co., 1898-1902	
	2-4	American Steel and Wire, 1896-1956	
	5-7	Bridgewater Gas Co., 1887-1894	
	8	Columbia Wire Co., 1891-1894	
	9	H.B. Scott Wire Co., 1879-1881	
	10	Woven Wire Fence, 1883-1938	
	11	E.L. Ellwood and Co. Employee Photograph, ca. 1885-1900 (5)	

Series III. Percheron Horse Business

10		Percheron Correspondence:
	1-7	A-Z, 1885-1895
10	8-18	A-Z, 1886-1888
	19	A-Z, 1887-1888
	20-27	A-B, 1890-1895
11	1-15	C-Z, 1890-1894
	16	Assorted Items, n.d.

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
	17	Agents Weekly Report, 1887
	18-23	Catalog Requests, Arkansas-Montana
12	1-5	Catalog Requests, New Mexico-Wyoming
	1 volume	Receipts, October 20, 1896-November 14, 1897
	3 volumes	Letterbooks, March 20- August 27, 1897
13	4 volumes	Letterbooks, August 4-November 24, 1897
14	4 volumes	Letterbooks, November, 1897- January 10, 1898
15	3 volumes	Letterbooks, January 9-February 12, 1898
16	1 volume	Letterbook, February 12-24, 1898
17		Index to Ledger No. 3, A-K
18		Index to Ledger No. 3, L-Z
Oversize	3 volumes	General Ledgers
Oversize		
Drawer 3, Folder 8		Certificates of Pedigree for Horses, 1902, 1903, (2) Larchwoods Pedigree Stud Tree for Jersey Cattle, n.d.