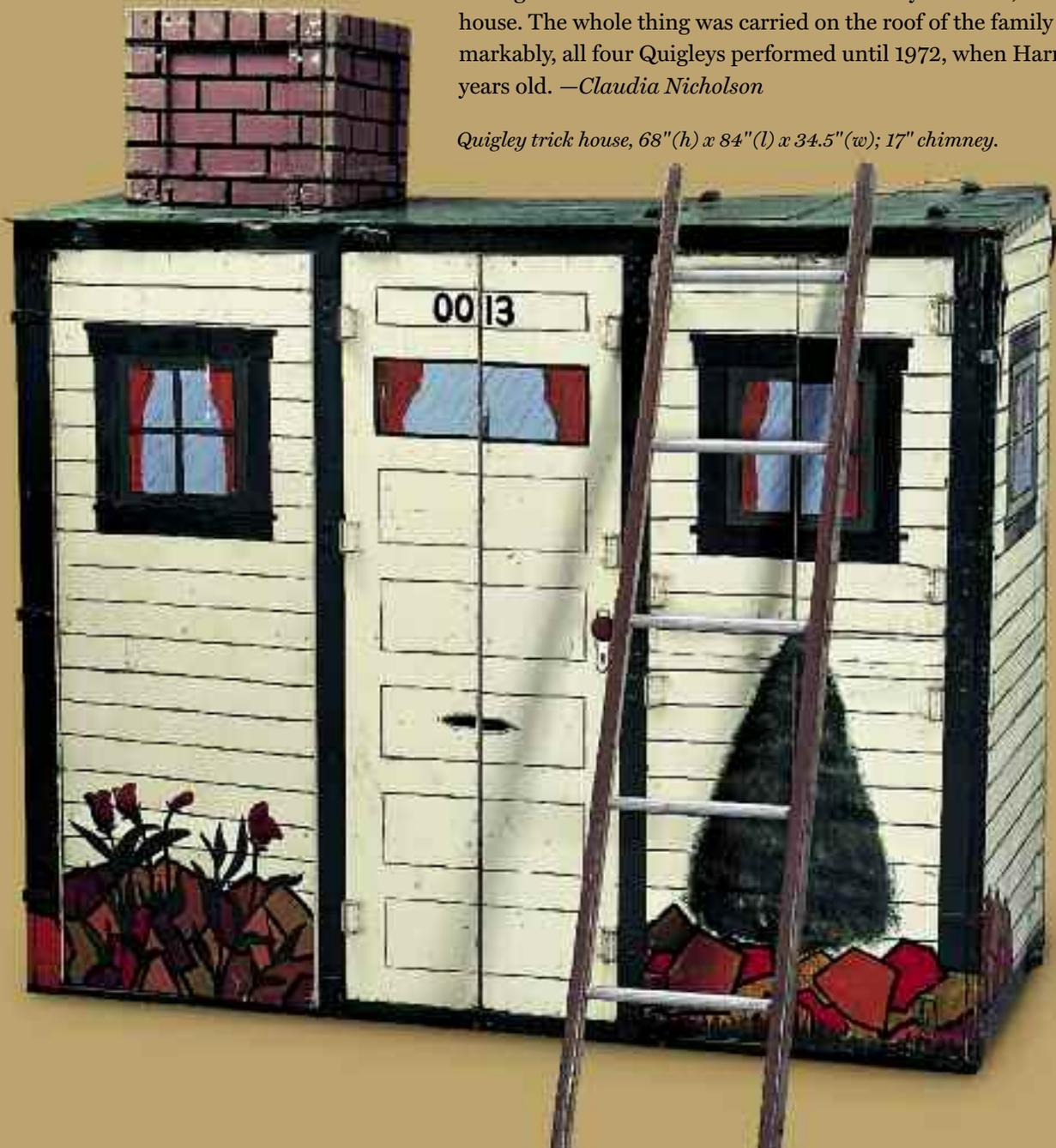


HARRY QUIGLEY WAS A MINNEAPOLIS PARK BOARD EMPLOYEE whose life-long hobby was tumbling. His daughters, Joan and Janet, inherited his love of the sport. In the 1940s, when the girls were old enough, Harry formed a family acrobatic troupe. The Quigleys went on the road, playing county fairs every year during his two-week vacation and traveling throughout Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas, and Montana. His wife, Mary Ann, no tumbler herself, played straight woman, stage and property manager, costume presser, and “curfew-enforcement officer.”

Quigley himself built this nearly six-foot-tall “trick” house as the major prop for one of the family’s key routines. Dressed in top hat and tails, Harry and another relative (variously, his brother, nephew, or son-in-law) portrayed a pair of drunks coming home. The men would try to get into the house by any means, only to be ejected. At the end of the act, after both men had been tossed out of the house, Mary Ann would come out the front door and throw a top hat after them.

To accommodate their shenanigans, the three-part house front is fitted out with (from left) a revolving panel, a front door on reversible hinges, and a concealed Dutch door. A rubber wall (for fights inside), a roof trapdoor, and two trick ladders (one collapsible, the other with angled rungs to facilitate sliding downward) complete the prop. This house, now in the Minnesota Historical Society’s collections, is the second that the Quigleys used in their enduring act. The roof detaches and the chimney folds flat, as does the house. The whole thing was carried on the roof of the family car. Remarkably, all four Quigleys performed until 1972, when Harry was 65 years old. —*Claudia Nicholson*

*Quigley trick house, 68" (h) x 84" (l) x 34.5" (w); 17" chimney.*





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