

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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date entered

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Phillip Paul Bliss House
and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Rome Borough N/A vicinity of
state Pennsylvania code 042 county Bradford code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name P.P. Bliss Gospel Songwriters Museum, Inc.
street & number Main Street
city, town Rome N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bradford County Courthouse
street & number N/A
city, town Towanda state Pennsylvania 18848

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date federal state county local
depository for survey records

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Phillip Paul Bliss House is a clapboard wood-frame building with a front two-story rectangular section and a one-story rear ell. The building's gable end orientation with eave returns betray influence of the Greek Revival style of architecture. However the building is essentially a vernacular house type with very simple ornamentation. The Bliss House possesses most of its original interior and exterior features from its date of construction 1863-1864.

The front section has an asphalt shingled, gable roof and a central chimney. The front (east) facade of this section is three bays wide under the gable and four bays wide on the first floor. The second story of the facade is symmetrically organized with two six-over-one windows flanking a centrally located door (inoperable). The first story consists of a centrally located entrance door with two six-over-one windows unequally spaced to the right and to the left and with a second door (also inoperable) located at the extreme left. A porch with shed roof supported by four turned posts spans the front facade between the first and second floors.

The sides of the front section are three bays wide and feature a plain entablature with wide frieze. The north elevation has two six-over-one wood framed windows and one six-over-six window. The south elevation is spanned by the porch which continues from the main facade. On this elevation the porch is partially enclosed and the enclosed area is opened by a single window and by a door leading onto the open porch. Beneath the porch roof paired six-over-one windows and a single paneled door penetrate the wall of the main section of the house.

The rear elevation (west facade) of the main body of the house has a nine over six window on the first floor, and a six-over-six window and a small two pane window on the second floor. A simple projecting cornice crowns this facade.

Attached to the rear elevation is a one story ell. This ell has a central chimney, and a gable roof covered by asphalt shingles and corrugated metal. The north facade of this ell has two six-over-six wood-framed windows flanked by a boarded-up window and a small single pane window. The west facade has a solid wood door at one edge. One half of the south facade of the ell has a small porch with a wood-framed door and one six-over-six window. The other half of the south facade may represent an extension or porch enclosure and has one six-over-six window.

The interior of the front section is divided into four main rooms. The front entrance on the first floor opens into a living room. To the left of this room is a parlor. Behind these two rooms is a dining room. A stairway situated behind the living room leads to a second floor bedroom with sloping ceilings.

Each of these rooms has original, eight inch wide pine floor boards. Windows and doors in these rooms are framed by simple wooden molding. The doors have their original hinges and latches. The living room and parlor retain their original plastered walls and ceiling. Due to water damage, the plaster ceilings and walls in the dining room and bedroom have been replaced by masonite.

The interior of the ell section consists of a kitchen, wood house, and bathroom. These rooms also retain their wide floor boards, simple moldings, and original door hinges and latches. Like the dining room, the walls and ceiling in the kitchen have been replaced with masonite. The woodhouse has its original hand cut wooden walls.

The house has good integrity. Alterations to the building's original appearance include replacement of water damaged walls and ceilings in three rooms, and installation of new asphalt shingles or corrugated metal or roofs.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1863-1864

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This house is significant for its association with Phillip Paul Bliss, a 19th century composer of gospel songs which have had considerable popularity and influence. Bliss wrote songs that contributed much to the success of leading nineteenth-century evangelists such as Dwight L. Moody. With their direct emotional appeal and simple imagery, his songs were very popular among the thousands of Protestants who flocked to revival meetings. Bliss used this house as his home in Pennsylvania during much of his musical career. He also wrote some of his popular hymns in this house.

Bliss was born to poor parents in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania in 1838. He spent his first fourteen years on his parent's farm, and then worked for five years on farms and lumber camps. At age nineteen he moved to Rome, Bradford County, where he began his professional music career by giving music lessons to area residents. He also became a member of a Rome family of singers when he married Lucy J. Young in 1859. And in 1863-1864 he bought a plot of land in Rome and had a local carpenter build the house eventually known as the Bliss House. As soon as the house was completed, he moved his elderly parents from Clearfield County to the home. Thus by 1864 Bliss had begun his musical career and firmly established his ties to Rome and the Bliss House.

Bliss abruptly changed the course of his career in 1865 when he moved to Chicago to work for a firm named Root and Cady. This firm offered music lessons and organized music conventions in the Chicago area. He also began to write gospel hymns while employed by this company.

In 1869 Bliss chanced to meet Dwight L. Moody at an open-air revival meeting in Chicago. Impressed with Bliss's fine voice, Moody encouraged him to sing the gospel. Within several years Bliss devoted his life to singing on Moody's evangelistic tours of the east, midwest, and south. He also composed gospel songs that were sung on Moody's tours. While travelling to Chicago in 1876 to sing in Moody's church, Bliss and his wife were killed in a train wreck in Ashtabula, Ohio.

During his brief life Bliss gained fame as a gospel song writer. He composed over 300 hymns, many of which were published in five song books between 1871 and 1874. His first song book, "The Charm," became popular for Sunday-school music. His later songs and books were used widely in revival meetings throughout the United States. Bliss's songs continued to have widespread use and influence in Protestant churches after his death. Songs such as "Hold the Fort" and "Pull for the Shore" have been reprinted in Protestant hymnals ever since his death. His songs remain among the popular and often sung hymns in churches, especially in Baptist and Methodist churches.

The Bliss House in Rome retains the closest and longest association with Bliss's life and career. Bliss lived in several homes and travelled extensively while giving lessons and touring with Moody, yet Bliss returned often to see his parents, in-laws and his children who were raised by his in-laws. In fact, he and his wife were travelling back to Chicago from seeing their family in Rome when they were killed. The Bliss House became his home whenever he was in Rome. According to his diary, he also wrote some of his hymns in this house during his visits to Rome.

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Other homes and monuments once connected with Bliss have a weaker association with him or no longer exist. On his frequent journeys to Rome he visited his in-laws' house which still stands in Rome. However, there is no record that he stayed frequently at his in-laws' house or considered it his home as he did the Bliss House. A cenotaph was also erected in Rome to commemorate Bliss. His first home in Chicago burned down in the great Chicago fire of 1871. After the conflagration he bought a second home in Chicago. However, it is not known if this home still exists. Even if this home was still standing, Bliss owned the house for only five years during a period when he was often traveling.

Thus the Bliss House was most closely associated with the career of the prominent gospel song writer. It continues that connection today. Although the home was sold from the Bliss family in 1877, it became the P.P. Bliss Gospel Songwriters Museum in 1965 and now houses many of Bliss's personal effects and manuscripts.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Attached)

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 0.4

Quadrangle name Rome

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

JTM References

A

1,8	3,8,8	5,8,0	4,6	3,4	6,7,0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Attached)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George L. Abell

organization P.O. Bliss Gospel Songwriters Museum date 1986

street & number Main Street telephone (717) 247-7430

city or town Rome. state Pennsylvania

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Dr. Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date _____

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

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Item number 9, 10

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Bibliographic References

- Diaries of Phillip Paul Bliss,
P.P. Bliss Gospel Songwriters Museum, Rome, Pennsylvania.
Untitled pamphlet published by the P.P. Bliss Gospel Songwriters
Museum, Rome, Pennsylvania.
Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1957) I, p. 376.
D.W. Whittle, ed. Memoirs of Phillip P. Bliss (1877), passim.
Victor Charles Detty, P.P. Bliss, July 9, 1838-December 29, 1876
(1938), passim.
Richard E. Day, Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody,
Commoner of Northfield (1936), pp. 133-134.

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

Beginning at a point on the northwest side of Main Street,
then proceeding northeast 108 feet along Main Street; then proceeding
northwest 99 feet; then proceeding west 102 feet 8 inches; then
proceeding southwest 39 feet; then proceeding southeast 167 feet
3 inches back to the point of beginning.

This boundary includes the house and all land historically
associated with the house.

46 1/2' E.
39'



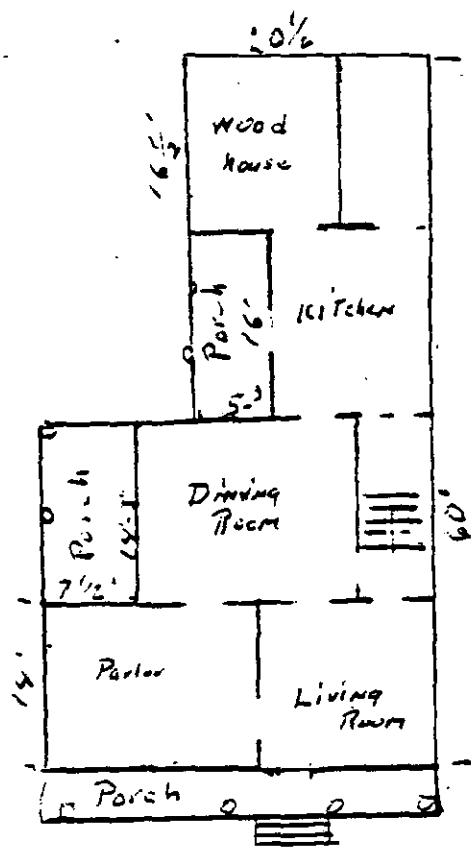
LOT
CONTAINS
19030 sq. ft.

89'-10" S. 83° E.

112'-10"

Maryotts Property

167'-3"



Home of
Dr. Rice
→
who was Chief
Surgeon with
Sherman on his
March to Atlanta

99'

97' 46 1/2' E

11'

Not To Scale.

Main St.

Phillip Paul Bliss Homestead.
Lot purchased May 1863 cost 1000.
1 1/2 story house built 1864 " 300.⁰⁰

187000m E

390

