

007 19 1984

United States Department of the Interior
 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
 National Park Service

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 Phillips House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 71 East 7th Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Arcata

N/A vicinity of

congressional district

state California

code 06

county Humboldt

code 023

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Arcata Public Improvement Corp.

street & number 736 F St., City Hall

city, town Arcata

N/A vicinity of

state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Humboldt County Courthouse

street & number 825 Fifth Street

city, town Eureka

state Calif. 95501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Reflections of Arcata's History has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date January 1979

federal state county local

depository for survey records Planning Dept., City of Arcata

city, town Arcata

state Calif 95521

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Phillips House is considered the best example of Greek Revival architecture in Arcata. Deep cornice returns on the gable ends, matching front and rear verandas set beneath the roofline, central entrances, and square veranda posts create the classic architecture of this little one-and-a-half story house. Typical of early Humboldt County houses are the 12-pane windows, clapboard siding, and gable roofline. Built on a hill above what was once "swamp and overflow land" along the old Indian trail which skirted Humboldt Bay, the Phillips House was located a half mile east of Union's plaza. The old Indian trail became the wagon road between Arcata and Eureka and, in time, residences were built nearby, but even today cattle graze in the old fields below the house. City of Arcata plans call for the construction of a sports complex in these fields, but the house will serve as the community's museum under the administration of the Historical Sites Society. Retaining a high degree of architectural integrity and historic character, the Phillips House is worthy of National Register designation.

* * * * *

Of woodframe construction, the one-and-a-half story Phillips House contains 1326 square feet of floor space plus 459 square feet in three attachments at the south side. These attachments will be retained by the Museum for storage, but could easily be removed. Extending the length of the house at front and rear are five-foot wide verandas. The house has an end-gable roofline with deep cornice returns, a wide frieze in the gables and a brick chimney. A vertical-board skirting covers the foundation around the entire house. During recent exterior renovation, a wood shingle roof replaced a tin one, foundation work and painting were completed, and a ramp was built for special population access. Interior renovation awaits funding. The uneven spacing of windows, doors, and veranda posts is quite old, perhaps the result of very early alterations, or, in the case of the posts, maybe the house was just built that way. The house yard is bordered on the north and east with a white picket fence. Old pasture fences mark the south and west boundaries. Yard plantings are limited to several old rose bushes, small trees and blackberry vines along the pasture fencerow.

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The front of the house faces west overlooking the Bay and bottom lands. There is a central door with a divided transom above and single, 12-pane windows on either side. The veranda has a vertical rail balustrade with four square posts set on small bases and topped by simple capitals.

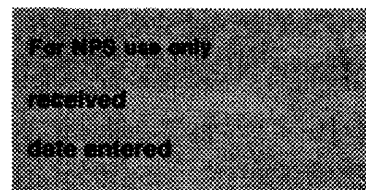
On the north wall are two, 12-pane windows in the upper story and two in the lower. Uneven spacing for the lower windows is obvious and probably the result of an old alteration. The deep-set cornice returns and wide gable frieze give a decided classic character to this side of the house.

The east side repeats the central door and veranda of the front facade. There are four, 12-pane windows along the east wall. There are two, 12-pane windows in the upper story of the south wall. South-side attachments have small, multipaned windows and three different sidings--clapboard and two widths of cove-rustic shiplap.

The house retains a high degree of architectural and historic integrity. The Old Arcata Road still passes the house on the north and to the west is open pasture extending to the freeway at the edge of Arcata's commercial district. To the south below the hill are the old barns of the Roberts Dairy. Beyond and to the east, however, are apartment complexes. The residential area to the north contains both turn-of-the-century and modern styles. City of Arcata plans for the thirty acres below the house call for the construction of a sports complex which will include athletic fields and buildings. The house and its lot have been split off from this larger piece and are leased to the Historical Sites Society for the Museum.

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Through the years, changes have been made to the interior of the Phillips House. Doors between rooms have been relocated; the south-side additions were made many years ago for the kitchen, washroom and bathroom; and wiring, plumbing, and the rebuilding of the stairs were necessary to meet City codes.¹ However, there has been little modernizing of the house and it remains surprisingly primitive with its 1850's construction and character intact. Window and door mouldings are plain and the floors are unfinished boards of varying widths. The original wallpaper was glued directly to the walls, but cheesecloth and more wallpaper were added later.

The two rooms on the west side are what were probably the sitting room and the parlor. Small fireplaces, lined with brick and topped by narrow mantels, are back-to-back and share the brick chimney, which can be seen beneath the stairway. An entrance area from the rear door and a dining room are located on the east side of the house. A kitchen which is not modern, a washroom, and a bathroom with a clawed-foot bathtub are located in the south-side additions. There are three bedrooms upstairs--two on the north side and a larger one which extends across the south side with a marvelous view of the bay and bottomlands.

Preservation of this simple interior will be the guiding objective in the renovation of the house to prepare it for Arcata's museum. Appropriate wallpaper and paint will be used to retain the settlement-period atmosphere and provide a proper setting for museum displays.

¹Recent code compliance required the widening of all interior doorways to 30", lessening the pitch of the steep interior stairway, and installation of wallboard on some interior walls.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" 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 1852 **Bullder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Phillips House is nominated to the National Register as the community's outstanding example of early, settlement-period Greek Revival architecture. In addition, research indicates that this little house may have been built in 1852, in which case, it qualifies as Arcata's oldest, architecturally-intact house. The original house retains a high degree of architectural integrity; the southside attachments are quite old, dating probably to at least the turn-of-the-century. Phillips House history reflects the community's history, recalling stories of the region's initial settlement in 1850, pioneering families drawn to the west coast by hopes of a better life, and the emergence of a local dairy industry which continues to play a significant role in the economic life of Humboldt County. Appropriately, the Phillips House has been chosen as Arcata's museum. Its placement on the National Register will provide deserving recognition of its historical and architectural contributions to the community.

* * * * *

The history of the Phillips House goes back to William E. Phillips who came to Humboldt Bay by ship in February 1851. A native of Massachusetts, Phillips, at age 24, was part of that first wave of immigrants to settle California's northcoast. Like his compatriots, he immediately began acquiring land, some through direct purchase other through settlement which eventually led to patents. In May 1852, he was deeded a mile-long, narrow strip of land from William Sansbury, one of the members of the Union Company which made first claim to the lands surrounding what came to be Arcata. It is within this strip that Phillips built his handsome little house.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed Records, Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, CA.
Humboldt Times, 14 Oct. 1854; 9 Aug. 1856.
Tax assessment records, HSU Library, Arcata, CA.
U.S. Census, 1860, Humboldt County, Union Township.
Susie Baker Fountain Notebooks, HSU Library, Arcata, CA.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property about .37 acres

Quadrangle name Arcata South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	4	0	9	2	4	0	4	5	2	4	2	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the SW corner of 7th & Union streets; thence S 120'; thence SWly along a pasture road 120'; thence N 170'; thence E 110' to point of beginning. Boundaries encompass the historic building and its grounds on the surviving remnant of the original property.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susie Van Kirk

organization N/A

date 15 Oct. 1984

street & number 1162 C St.

telephone (707) 822-6066

city or town Arcata

state CA 95521

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Kathryn Gualtieri

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9-19-85

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the

for Helene Bryan
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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~~HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE~~
National Park Service

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Earliest tax assessment records for 1853 show a value of \$1,125 for "improvements on real estate" for William Phillips. Those were substantial improvements and may well include the house and barn which figured in a murder trial in 1854. Located directly east of the house, the original barn, which was torn down in 1977, had hand hewn timber and wooden pegs, and was of mortise and tenon construction.

Phillips listed his occupation as blacksmith in the 1860 census, but that record also indicates that he was a farmer of some note. The cash value of his farm, which included 70 acres of improved land and 210 acres of unimproved (mostly wetlands) was valued at \$1700. In addition to farm implements and machinery, he had an assortment of horses, mules, pigs, and a dozen milk cows. Most impressive are the 140 head of cattle which he grazed on the land; no other person in Union township came close to owning that many cattle, the next count being only 40 head owned by a prominent Arcata citizen.

Phillips was married to Sarah who was eleven years his junior. In 1860 they had two sons, ages five and three. A baby daughter had died in the fall of 1859 from whopping cough. In 1868, Sarah divorced Phillips and both left the area. The following year, the 274-acre Phillips farm was sold to Brice M. Stokes. The farm included 120 acres of swamp and overflow land patented in 1861 and 160 acres patented in 1864 with an adjustment to that 160 acres made in 1867 at which time Phillips gave his neighbor Findley Lindsey 23 acres on the north side of the county road (now 7th street) and Lindsey gave Phillips 17 acres on the south side of the road. The deed for that transaction includes a drawing of the Phillips House and the Lindsey House which still stands across and just down the road to the west.

The story of the Stokes family migration west is a real "covered wagon" story. Catherine Wilson, a native of Indiana, and Brice M. Stokes of Virginia were married in Missouri in 1845. Catherine's brother Isaac had been a member of the land party which discovered Humboldt Bay in December 1849. No doubt his contact with the northcoast encouraged Catherine and Brice to head west. The party left Missouri in April 1854 in five wagons and a carriage. Included in the group were Brice and Catherine, their four children, Brice's mother, Catherine's parents, and her four brothers, one of whom had a wife and child. The trip was not without both tragedy and joy.

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Catherine's mother, Susan Wilson, died and was buried on the Platte River in Nebraska and Brice's mother died in the Sacramento Valley. At Willow Spring near Salt Lake, baby Margaret was born to Catherine and Brice. Arriving in San Francisco, the women and children came to the northcoast by ship while the men came overland, meeting in Arcata in September 1854. In time there were nine Stokes children, some of whom remained in the Humboldt area throughout their lives. The family owned the house and farm until 1888, when Melvin P. Roberts purchased 197 acres of the original Phillips farm.

Melvin P. Roberts was born in Maine in 1841, came to California at 19, and tried his hand at mining before arriving in Humboldt County in 1860. He was first engaged in logging and stock raising, eventually running 9,000 sheep on Mad River. Roberts was married to May Nelson in 1887 and the three Roberts children--Hazel, Atlant, and M.P. Roberts, Jr.--were born in the Phillips House.

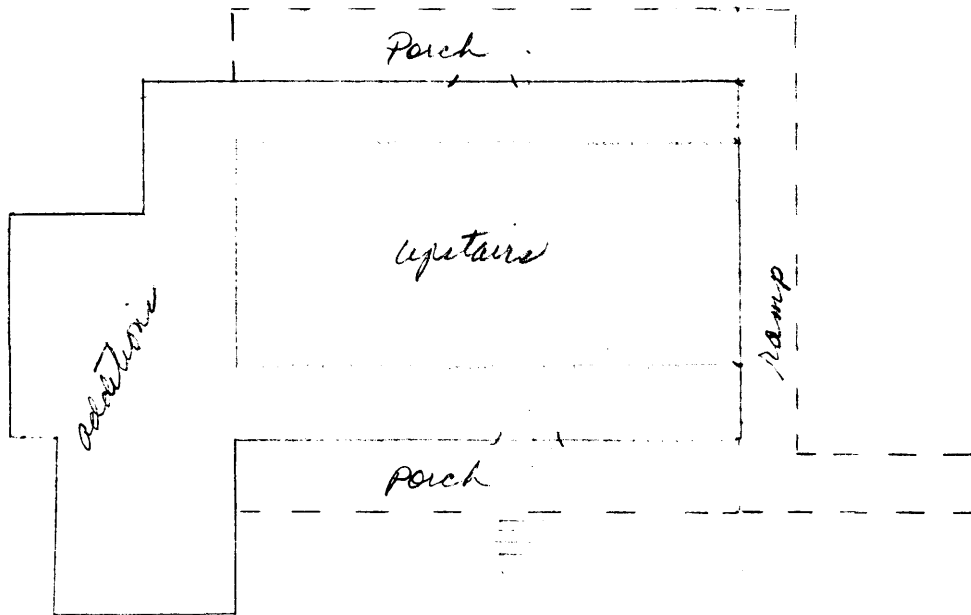
In 1882 he is said to have started the first dairy in the Arcata Bottom, moving his operation to the Phillips-Stokes place in 1888 where he had 100 cows. He was a stockholder in the United Creameries and involved in politics, winning a seat in the State Assembly in 1901. Beginning in the 1890's, Roberts, along with several local men, formed the Arcata Land Improvement Company which undertook construction of the dykes at the edge of Humboldt Bay for the purpose of creating pasture lands out of the bay's wetlands. Through their efforts, hundreds of acres of wetlands were "reclaimed," including the "swamp and overflow" lands first patented by Phillips in the 1860's. On this land, Roberts ran a successful dairying operation, later carried on by his son and son-in-law and, at various times, by families who leased the land. Dairying continued on the farm through the 1950's, and even though a highway and street bisect the land and apartments have been built on a portion of the farm, cattle still graze on the pastures to the south and west of the little Phillips House.

Roberts died in 1926; his wife in 1932 and the farm was divided up among the children, but remained in family ownership until 1959. In 1981 the house and 30 acres, including the horse and cow barns built in the 1930's, were purchased by the City of Arcata as the Arcata Public Improvement Corporation for the purpose of developing a sports complex on the open space. The house is leased to the Historical Sites Society which has been able to accomplish exterior restoration, but still awaits sufficient funding to complete interior work for the museum.

Noteworthy for its outstanding contribution to the architectural and historic heritage of Arcata, the Phillips House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

pasture fence

PHILLIPS HOUSE
71 East 7th Street
Aracata, Humboldt, County, California

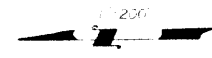


picket fence

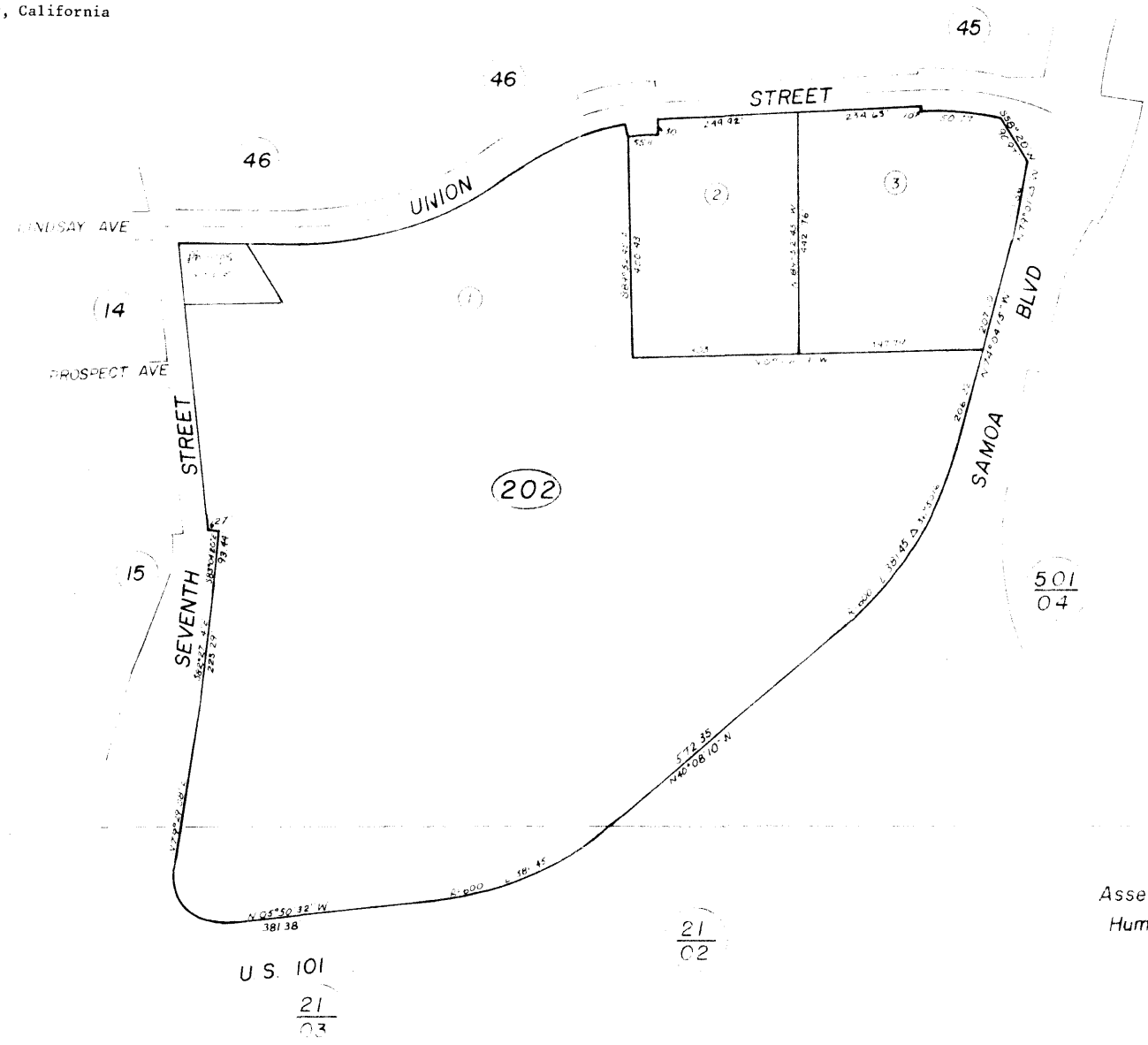
N →

1 square = 1 foot
Phillips House

gate - *Picket fence*



PHILLIPS HOUSE
71 East 7th Street
Arcata, Humboldt County, California



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R.S. Bk. 21, Pg. 87

Assessor's Map Bk. 503-Pg. 20
Humboldt County, Calif.