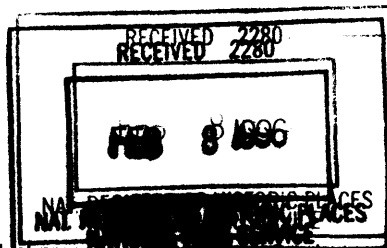


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bagley-Bliss House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1290 Royalsborough Road N/A not for publication

city or town South Durham vicinity

state Maine code ME county Androscoggin code 001 zip code 04222

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Evelyn Fitzgerald 2/2/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

3/22/96
Date of Action

Bagley-Bliss House
Name of Property

Androscoggin, Maine
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granite

walls Wood/Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1850

Significant Dates

c. 1850

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Bagley-Bliss House
Name of Property

Androscoggin, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	19	410130	4866330
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 1995

street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Sta. telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**BAGLEY-BLISS HOUSESection number 7 Page 2

The Bagley-Bliss House is a large two-story, five-bay Greek Revival style frame building that is two rooms deep, and has a one-story ell. It is sheathed in weatherboards and wood shingles and is supported by a granite block foundation. The house is located in a rural setting along Royalsborough Road (Rt. 136).

Facing south, the symmetrically composed front elevation features a central doorway comprised of a recessed three-panel door flanked by full length sidelights set in a modest Greek Revival enframing. Two six-over-six double hung windows are located on either side of the entrance and five are positioned on the second story, the center one of which is off-center. All of the windows have shallow pedimented lintels. Narrow corner boards rise to a frieze board of moderate width which in turn meets the slightly projecting cornice. A single interior end chimney punctuates the roof about mid way between the ridge and cornice on the west side (two others rise through the rear slope of the roof).

The west side elevation of the main block exhibits a symmetrical fenestration pattern comprised of four six-over-six double hung windows on the first and second story, in addition to a single six-over-six in the tympanum of the pedimented gable end. The deeply recessed ell consists of a taller five-bay section containing living quarters and a lower addition at the north end. A shallow gabled projection in the center bay of the ell appears to be a twentieth century enclosure of the original entrance on this elevation. It has a single six-over-six window and is flanked by two similar windows. Three small rectangular windows are located below the eave line, one each between the pairs of windows and the third over the projecting addition. One centrally placed brick flue rises through the ell's roof ridge. A large track mounted sliding door sheltered by a pent roof is located on the rear addition. A nineteenth century photograph of the house that shows the ell reveals that the track mounted door replaced a two-leaf hinged door and a transom, and that the northernmost pair of six-over-six windows took the place of a doorway, perhaps leading into the woodshed. The alteration of the two-leaf door had occurred by the 1930s as indicated in a pair of photographs from that period, but the window change came sometime later.

There are four asymmetrically placed windows on the rear (north) wall of the main house, and a pair of nine-over-six windows and two doors on the gable end of the ell addition. This asymmetrical fenestration pattern is continued on the east side elevation where there are five six-over-six windows in the front block, in addition to eight windows (three of which are grouped together) and a two-leaf door along the ell. Both the east and north elevations of the ell are covered with wood shingles.

On the interior, the house exhibits very modest detailing, the most elaborate feature of which is the central stair with its characteristic Greek Revival newel posts. All of the door and window surrounds are comprised of flat boards, as are the two mantels. One door located in a second floor bedroom features six raised panels and is mounted to its frame with H-L hinges. This may be an element that was reused from the earlier dwelling which is believed to have been located on this site, some or all of which might

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

BAGLEY-BLISS HOUSE

Section number 7 Page 3

constitute the present ell. Two additional interior features of note are the large (and now freestanding) fireplace in the ell, and a massive vaulted brick structure in the basement of the main block. The fireplace opening is flanked by a bake oven and cleanout, both of which retain their iron doors, whereas water basins are located on two of the remaining three sides. The basement structure is similar in size and construction to those which are typically used to support large central chimney stacks. In this building, however, the base appears to have been used to provide a central support for the framing of the large two-story, double-pile front block, as well as one fireplace at the end of the hall. On the other hand, it may be a vestige of an earlier building that employed a central chimney, although the consistency of the framing indicates that the subsequent expansion was a virtually complete one.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**BAGLEY-BLISS HOUSESection number 8 Page 2

The Bagley-Bliss House is a large two-story, five-bay, double pile frame dwelling with a one-story ell. According to local tradition it was constructed about 1770 for O. Israel Bagley, and is considered to be the oldest house in Durham. However, the unmistakable Greek Revival style characteristics of the main block suggest that this section was either completely remodeled in the nineteenth century or was actually constructed at that time. During this period it was occupied by Charles Bliss, and it remained in the possession of his descendants until the 1970s. The house is eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion C for its local architectural significance.

O. Israel Bagley (1747-1797) and his wife Mary (Snow) Bagley (1747-____) were among the earliest settlers in Durham, then known as Royalsborough. He was engaged in a number of business pursuits including the first store in the community, a potash manufactory, shoe making, and the operation of a wind powered grist mill. The town's first school was held at the Bagley residence, which was also a public inn. Israel Bagley died in Savannah, Georgia of yellow fever during a voyage of the vessel "Mary Ann" of which he was master.

It is uncertain how long Mary Bagley continued to reside on this property, but local historians state that in 1836 it was acquired by Charles Bliss (1800-1873). A native of Columbia, Connecticut, Bliss moved to Durham three years after the death of his first wife, Mary (Webster) Bliss. The Bliss family had two daughters: Clarinda and Martha, but it is not known if they accompanied their father to Durham or came sometime later (Clarinda was residing with her father in 1850 according to the census; Martha had died in 1848). In 1843 Bliss married Lydia E. Cox of Brunswick, and they had four children, only one of whom, Charles H. Bliss, lived to adulthood. At the taking of the census in 1850, the Bliss household consisted of Charles, his wife Lydia and daughters Clarinda, Mary, and Harriet, as well as his older brother Achsah Bliss. In addition, four other residents of the household included Lucius Burbeck, a carpenter born in Canada; Caleb and Jacob Schumann, laborers born in Nova Scotia; and Sumner Foss, a native of Maine. The Agricultural Schedule of the 1850 census reveals that the Bliss farm was comprised of a total of 150 acres of land, and had a cash value of \$2,800. The primary focus of this farm was dairy products, with a total output of 300 pounds of butter and 3,500 pounds of cheese. This latter figure is especially striking, and it appears to have been the highest in Durham at that time. Bliss' herd of nine milch cows was also one of the two or three largest in town.

Charles and Lydia (Cox) Bliss resided on this farm until their deaths, after which the property descended to their son Charles Henry Bliss (1850-____) and his wife Etta L. (Tracy) Bliss. Charles H. Bliss continued the agricultural focus of the homestead, and his interest in improving its productivity is suggested by his active role in the formation in 1886 of the Durham Historical Society of which he was elected the first vice-president. Charles and Etta Bliss had eight children, five of whom reached adulthood. Their three sons all moved away, however, and the farm was passed to the two maiden daughters: Emma

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**BAGLEY-BLISS HOUSESection number 8 Page 3

Tracy Bliss (1883-1976) and Mary Fannie Bliss (1885-1978). They had apparently vacated the house in the early 1960s as it was said to have stood empty for some twenty years prior to its rehabilitation in 1982.

There is very little visual evidence left of the house which Israel Bagley is said to have built about 1770. If in fact the building which exists today dates in large part from that period, it was subjected to a thorough remodeling in the nineteenth century, probably by the Bliss Family. This scenario is not inconceivable since the general form of the house is very traditional. It may also help to explain the massive vaulted brickwork that is centrally located in the basement; a structure that is typically associated with large central chimneys, but would seem to be unnecessary in its present use. Nonetheless, the virtual obliteration of the c.1770 interior and its replacement with the fashionable -- albeit restrained -- Greek Revival detailing would have represented an extraordinary undertaking, especially in this rural setting. In this context, it is tempting to speculate about the presence in the household of carpenter Lucius Burbeck as reported in the 1850 census. Was he engaged to carry out this project? Unfortunately, the answer to this question may prove to be completely elusive, but the idea remains an intriguing one. Like the front block, the ell does not have the appearance of a pre-Revolutionary building, although its surviving hearth with two water basins may very well be from an early period. The ell was substantially remodeled during the 1982 rehabilitation.

Although the Bagley-Bliss House lacks the fully developed Greek Revival detailing of many of its urban or village counterparts, it exhibits a typical range of features found on such buildings in rural areas of the state. These include the central entrance with its recessed door framed by sidelights and a simplified entablature with a pronounced cornice; shallow pedimented hoods above the windows; wide corner pilasters that rise to a broad frieze; and pedimented gable ends. Inside, the most overt Greek Revival details are the stair with its bulbous turned newel post and thin balusters, and the mantelpiece in the room behind the central hall.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

BAGLEY-BLISS HOUSE

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property of five acres occupies the Town of Durham tax map 7, lot 122.

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the house and remaining five acres of land that are historically associated with this property.