



## Glendale Library, Arts & Culture

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## Finding Aid for the Bliss Ranch Collection, 1894-2004

### Collection Overview

**Title:** Bliss Ranch Collection

**Dates:** 1894-2004

**ID:** BRC

**Primary Creator:** Unknown

**Extent:** 0.75 linear feet, 1 box, 1 flat file

**Arrangement:** This collection is arranged in alphabetical order by folder title, followed by album boards and end pages. An oversized map is housed separately.

**Forms of Material:** Paper Records, Photographic Materials

**Language of Materials:** English

### Abstract

The collection consists of a small, disassembled album of mounted photographs depicting the Bliss Ranch, owned by brothers John Dallett Bliss and Robert Parker Bliss from the mid to late 1890s. The ranch was located near the base of the Verdugo Mountains in Glendale, California, on property once part of the Rancho San Rafael Spanish land grant. In 1900, Leslie C. Brand purchased the property and shortly thereafter he sold a tract to the Pacific Electric Railway. Bliss Station became the northern terminus for a line extension running from downtown Los Angeles to the Verdugo Mountains. The property also included the Sepulveda Adobe, which the railroad turned into the legendary Casa Verdugo restaurant, a popular tourist destination known nationwide.

### Biographical History

John Dallett Bliss and Robert Parker Bliss were sons of William and Athenaide (née Dallett) Bliss of Philadelphia. William Bliss was born in Chipping Norton, England in 1833 and came to the U.S. as a boy where he began work with Dallett Brothers shipping in Philadelphia. Established in the 1820s, the Red "D" line originally traded American soap, flour, and wines for coffee, skins, and indigo from Venezuela. William rose through the company, and in 1862 after the death of his father-in-law John Dallett, he took over the business in partnership with William G. Boulton. The company then became known as Dallett, Boulton and Bliss and Company. The same year, John Dallett Bliss was born, followed by William Jr.

in 1865, and Robert Parker Bliss in 1870. After the death of Athenaide in 1872, William married her sister Anna Dallett to whom a daughter Anita was born in 1875. In 1881, the family relocated to New York where the business transferred when the company was incorporated as the Atlantic and Caribbean Steam Navigation Company, and the fleet changed from sailing vessels to steamships. With faster ships, the Red "D" line dominated trade with Venezuela until the company dissolved in 1936. It is known as the longest running shipping line in U.S. maritime history with company papers held at the Independence Seaport Museum, J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library.

Before the family's move from Philadelphia, John Bliss entered the University of Pennsylvania; however, he left while still a freshman in 1879. Robert Bliss graduated from Yale, and served in the Seventh Regiment, National Guard of New York. Both brothers traveled outside of the United States as young men, possibly to Venezuela, where the family owned a plantation.

Four years after the death of their father in 1890, John and Robert turned from East Coast based ventures toward the west, where they purchased acreage near the Verdugo Mountains in Glendale, California from retired clergyman, George Baugh. The land had previously been the property of Rafaela Verdugo de Sepulveda, granddaughter of Jose Maria Verdugo, owner of the original Spanish land grant, Rancho San Rafael. The Bliss Ranch included a large house and barn, and the brothers bred horses and cultivated citrus trees. The property also included the Sepulveda Adobe, originally the home of Rafaela Verdugo de Sepulveda and her husband Fernando Sepulveda.

In 1897, John Bliss married Clede Whiting, whose five year old son kept the name John Whiting for several years, but eventually became known as John Dallett Bliss, Jr. Robert Bliss died in New York in 1900 at the age of 29, and the same year, the ranch was sold to Glendale developer Leslie C. Brand. John Bliss and his family moved to Santa Monica, where he established a grocery, and died in 1934 at the age of 68. His wife Clede passed away five years later, and John (Whiting) Dallett Bliss Jr. died in 1957 in Los Angeles.

## **Scope and Contents**

The collection consists of a small, disassembled album of mounted photographs depicting the exterior and interior of the ranch house, barn, livestock, and citrus plantings encompassing the ranch of brothers John Dallett Bliss and Robert Parker Bliss ca. 1896. A few of the photographs are portraits of horses and dogs, and although people are also included, none are identified. Also included in the collection are reproductions of the photographs in the form of prints, slides, and negatives. Additional material consists of photocopied pages from reference sources assembled by Glendale Library staff. Of particular interest is a photocopied map of the ranch property in 1894 noting ranch boundaries as well as the location of the house, barn, and the Sepulveda Adobe. The collection also includes a reproduction of a photograph of the house as it appeared while it was occupied by railway executive, John McMillan, and his family, circa 1905.

## **Subjects/Access Terms**

**Personal Names:** Bliss, John Dallett, 1862-1934  
Bliss, Robert Parker, 1870-1900  
McMillan, John, 1838-1921

**Corporate Name:** Bliss Ranch

**Topical Terms:** Ranches--California--Glendale

Rancho San Rafael

Sepulveda Adobe

**Geographic Names:** Glendale (Calif.)

Rancho San Rafael (Calif.)

## **Administrative Information**

**Processing Information:** Jacqueline Zak, 2018

Processing of collection and publication of finding aid made possible by generous donations from the [Community Foundation of the Verdugos](#) and the [Glendale Library Foundation](#).

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**Conditions Governing Access:** The collection is open for research use.

**Preferred Citation:** Bliss Ranch Collection. Glendale Central Library History Room. Glendale Library, Arts & Culture.

**Acquisition:** Purchase, Zeitlin & Ver Brugge Booksellers

## **Collection Contents**

### **Box 1**

**Folder 1:** House, Barn, and Landscape, Photographic Prints, ca. 1896

**Item 1:** Bliss house and barn with the Sepulveda Adobe visible in the foreground

**Item 2:** Bliss house and barn

**Item 3:** Sepulveda Adobe with the Bliss house in the background

**Item 4:** Bliss house and barn with small citrus tree plantings nearby, and a man in a horse-drawn buggy posing near a water hole in the foreground

**Item 5:** Man in a horse-drawn buggy in front of the barn with others standing nearby

**Item 6:** Citrus tree plantings

**Item 7:** Bliss house with men riding tilling equipment among citrus plantings in the foreground

**Item 8:** Bliss house entry area and staircase to the second floor

**Item 9:** Bliss house veranda with a man sitting in a chair and a dog at his feet  
Another man sits on the veranda's railing; barn and citrus plantings in the background

**Folder 2:** Livestock and Barn, Photographic Prints, ca. 1896

**Item 1:** Barn with horses on each side extending their necks from stalls

**Item 2:** Horse standing in front of the barn

**Item 3:** Horse standing in front of the barn

**Item 4:** Horse standing in front of a grassy area

**Item 5:** Horse standing in front of the barn with a man holding the reins

**Item 6:** Man sitting on the back of a horse in front of the barn

**Item 7:** Cow standing in front of the barn

**Item 8:** Man, a cow, and two dogs next to a white fence with barn in the background

**Folder 3:** Portraits, Photographic Prints, ca. 1896

**Item 1:** Portrait of a man sitting in a buggy drawn by two horses

**Item 2:** Portrait of a man in a suit and hat with two dogs next to a tree sapling

**Item 3:** Portrait of a dog standing on the Bliss house front steps

**Item 4:** Portrait of a dog in a wicker chair on the house veranda

**Folder 4:** Reproductions of Photographs, Prints, Slides and Negatives, 1981

**Folder 5:** Research Pages and News Clippings, Bliss Ranch, 1918-1922, 1995-1997

**Folder 6:** Research Pages, John McMillan, 1905-1914, 2004

**Folder 7:** Album Boards and End Pages

**Flat File 1:** "Map Showing Property of J.D. and R.P. Bliss in Ro. San Rafael, Los Angeles Co. Cala., scale: 1 in=6 chains, Surveyed Jan. 1894 by Wright and Nicholson," Photocopy, 1894