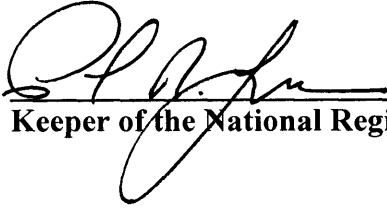




# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, Biloxi Lighthouse, reference number 73001012 was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 10/03/1973, as evidenced by the FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST Annual Listing of Historic Properties 02/19/1974. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.



Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

  
Date

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi	
COUNTY: Harrison	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Biloxi Lighthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
U. S. Highway 90 (median strip) at Porter Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Biloxi

STATE Mississippi	CODE 39531	COUNTY: Harrison	CODE 047
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Historic monument

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
City of Biloxi

STREET AND NUMBER:  
City Hall, 216 Lameuse Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Biloxi

STATE: Mississippi	CODE: 39530	CODE: 28
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Chancery Clerk's Office - 2nd District

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Harrison County 2nd District Courthouse  
101 E. Washington

CITY OR TOWN:  
Biloxi

STATE: Mississippi	CODE: 39531	CODE: 28
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
NONE

DATE OF SURVEY:                     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:                    STATE:                    CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Biloxi Lighthouse is a prefabricated, cast iron structure with a balustrade encircling the watch room. The conical tower is believed to be the first lighthouse in the South to have been constructed of this material, and the dome, unlike most lighthouses of the period, is also constructed of cast iron rather than the usual copper. Leakage problems had been reported in the earlier towers, and copper was also much more difficult to repair. The Biloxi Lighthouse rests upon a circular concrete base approximately three feet high and is surrounded by a circular iron fence. While the light itself stands fifty-three feet above ground level, its total distance above sea level is sixty-one feet. Ascending the side of the structure in a spiral fashion are four small windows or ports. In the center of the tower is a spiral cast iron stairway anchored to a vertical center-post which ascends from the base of the structure to the watch room.

The inside wall of the lighthouse is brick, having been laid in a conical fashion to conform to the cast iron sections. While the brick at first glance appears to be flush with the cast iron sections, there is actually a one-inch spacing between the exterior of the brick surface and the interior of the cast iron surface. The spacing was perhaps thought necessary to allow for the expanding and contracting of the materials.

Originally, the illuminating apparatus in the lighthouse consisted of nine cast brass lamps and separate reflectors. The lens were fifth order power and reportedly visible from thirteen miles on a clear day. The lamps burned lard oil. The only major alteration to the structure has occurred in the illuminating apparatus where the power source was converted from oil to electricity in 1926. The automatically-controlled, white electric lights of nine-thousand candle power are now unmanned and operate at the rate of three seconds on and four seconds off.

Considering the exposed nature of the lighthouse, its present condition is surprisingly good. The tower does lean slightly to the northeast because of 125 years of prevailing southwesterly winds, and the almost constant spray of saltwater has caused some corrosion on the portion of the structure facing the Mississippi Sound.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1848			
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			
<p>In March, 1847, the United States Congress appropriated twelve-thousand dollars for the erection of a lighthouse at Biloxi, Mississippi. Though the vicissitudes of war, unparalleled natural disaster, and man's technological advances have challenged its existence, the Biloxi Lighthouse beams today very much as it did 125 years ago. It is the most prominent landmark on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.</p> <p>After the congressional appropriation, the United States purchased a one-acre tract on the shores of the Mississippi Sound from one John Fayard. The location chosen was exceedingly exposed to wind and water, and the more notable storms of later years necessitated an excessive number of repairs to the lighthouse. Historically, the location was significant. The site of the third capital of the French province of Louisiana--Fort Louis--is nearby. Also, the roadbed of the Old Spanish Trail (now U.S. Highway 90) lies in the shadow of the Biloxi Lighthouse.</p> <p>Several iron founders along the Eastern seaboard entered construction bids for the lighthouse, and Messrs. Murray and Hazlehurst of Baltimore, Maryland, won the contract with a bid of \$6,347.50. The sum included both construction costs and shipment from the East coast to Biloxi. The illuminating apparatus for the tower, consisting of nine cast brass lamps and reflectors, was purchased separately from one Winslow Lewis. In March, 1848, the lighthouse tower arrived at Biloxi via the brig <u>General North</u>. Supervising the erection of the prefabricated structure at Biloxi was Henry Scoles of New Orleans.</p> <p>Marcellus J. Howard was the first lighthouse keeper at Biloxi. He served in that capacity until 1854, with an annual salary of four hundred dollars. Howard's successor, Mrs. Mary Reynolds, received the appointment at Biloxi with the aid of Mississippi's newly-elected senator, Albert Gallatin Brown.</p>			

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8.

An interesting story surrounds Mrs. Reynolds' tenure as lighthouse keeper. In June, 1861, a group of Biloxi citizens ordered the light extinguished and seized the key to the tower from Mrs. Reynolds. The group called themselves the "Home Guards," and their leader was Biloxi's mayor, J. Fewell. Mrs. Reynolds complained to Governor John J. Pettus that not only had control of the lighthouse been taken from her, but that "disreputable characters" had stolen most of her oil stores. Requesting that Governor Pettus have the lighthouse returned to her charge, she assured him that she had always disregarded her personal safety when exercising her duties. In fact, she noted, "I ascended the Tower at and after the last destructive storm (1860) when men stood appalled at the danger I encountered." While the governor's reply is not available, Mrs. Reynolds is officially listed as the lighthouse keeper until 1866.

Perry Younghans replaced Mary Reynolds at the Biloxi Lighthouse in 1866, and, while death terminated his position as lightkeeper in less than one year, his appointment was significant for the future. His family would tend the historic structure for over six decades. Younghans' wife, Maria, assumed the lighthouse duties immediately upon her husband's death and did not officially retire from the position until 1920. When Mrs. Younghans reached advanced age, her daughter, Miranda, became the "official assistant" and assumed her mother's position outright upon the latter's retirement. Miranda remained until 1929 and was replaced in that year by Biloxi's last civilian lightkeeper, W. D. Thompson. Thompson's tenure ended in 1939, when the United States Coast Guard assumed jurisdiction over the structure.

Visible on a clear day from a distance of thirteen miles, the Biloxi Lighthouse is tied closely to the economic history of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Prior to automation and the advent of sophisticated and numerous navigational instruments, the historic structure was the only mark for which Biloxi-bound vessels sailed. Its three-second, flashing light marked the entrance to the Biloxi harbor for the many schooners which once plied the Mississippi Sound and Gulf waters in search of shrimp and oysters, and it welcomed too those schooners which sought a lumber cargo on the Tchouticabouffa River and other inland waterways. Progress, however, first altered and then rendered obsolete the historic Biloxi Lighthouse. The figure of the lighthouse keeper passed into history with the installation of an automatically-controlled electric light in the mid-twentieth century, and the lighthouse itself became an anachronism when scientific navigational instruments were installed on boats and navigational lights were placed in the channel and on various Gulf islands.

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8.

The Biloxi Lighthouse was deeded to the city of Biloxi by the United States Coast Guard in August, 1968, after the completion of an extensive investigation by an historian in the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. The transfer was made possible by a provision of the Surplus Property Act of 1944 (48 Stat. 770), which authorizes the General Services Administration to dispose of surplus federal historical properties to any political subdivision for use as an historical monument, after recommendation by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites Buildings and Monuments.

Since the city of Biloxi's acquisition of the structure and the 0.643 acres on which it is located, the Biloxi Lighthouse has been under the "care-taker supervision" of the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce staff. The Chamber's general manager, Walter F. Fountain, and his staff periodically escort special groups who wish to visit the tower's watch room, and the structure is opened annually for the Gulf Coast's Spring Garden Pilgrimage. At present, the historic Biloxi Lighthouse is the focal point of a fast-developing recreational and entertainment complex. North of U. S. Highway 90 and situated on the site of the original lighthouse keeper's dwelling is the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce, where visitors may obtain information concerning the community's attractions. On the Chamber's grounds is the hull of an historic Biloxi Schooner, the Margaret Emilie (included in the National Register of Historic Places), and a statue of Pierre Le-Moyne D'Iberville, whose expedition resulted in the settlement of Veux Biloxi in 1699. In the future, the city of Biloxi hopes that a landscaped "mini-park" can be laid out around the lighthouse, that a seafood museum can be established within the Chamber of Commerce complex, and that a public fishing pier can be constructed over the water south of the lighthouse.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

"Biloxi Lighthouse." Undated and unpublished typescript in Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Division of Historic Sites and Archaeology, National Register of Historic Places file.

Fountain, Walter F. "I Am the Biloxi Lighthouse," Biloxi Chamber of Commerce brochure.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		30° 23' 39"	88° 54' 04"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 0.643 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Robert J. Bailey, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Mississippi Department of Archives and History**      DATE: **May 31, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Post Office Box 571**

CITY OR TOWN: **Jackson**      STATE: **Mississippi 39205**      CODE: **28**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/>    State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Charlotte Capers</u> <b>Charlotte Capers</b></p> <p>Title <u>Acting Director, Miss. Dept of Archives &amp; History</u></p> <p>Date <u>May 31, 1973</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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9.

Jackson Daily News, April 5, 1967.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Governors' Series E, Vol. 54, Administration of Governor John J. Pettus: Correspondence, October-December, 1861.

U. S., Department of the Interior. "Report on Application of City of Biloxi, Mississippi, for Transfer for Historic Monument Purposes of Approximately 0.643 Acres of Surplus Federal Property, Biloxi Lighthouse, Biloxi, Mississippi," prepared for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation by George C. Mackenzie, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Washington, D. C., September, 1967, pp. 1-2, 7, 9-10, 12, 14-19, 21-22.