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	CATEGORY DISTRICT XBUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT	OWNERSHIP & PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH PUBLIC ACQUISITION IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED	STATUS CCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRE ACCESSIBLE CESSIBLE SUPES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICT NO		PRE AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMEN &_GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	SENT USE MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE TRELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:
4	OWNER OF NAME City of STREET & NUMBER	PROPERTY Biloxi				
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7' DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Biloxi City Hall building, originally constructed as a U.S. Post Office, Court House, and Custom House, is a three-story, seven-bay Neo-Classical structure which faces west at the southeast corner of Lameuse and Jackson streets in Biloxi, Mississippi. Of steel construction, the building is finished in gray Italian marble and conforms to the Italian classical formula with its rusticated, round-arched base and its ashlar-finished upper stories. This surface difference is most apparent in the dominant facade feature, a projecting hexastyle portico with smooth-surfaced Corinthian columns set on a rusticated loggia and linked with simple cast-iron balustrade. The end columns of the portico and their corresponding pilasters are square with stylized Corinthian capitals. Still within the Italian tradition, the piano nobile is present, with a grand second-floor space indicated by full-length windows capped with alternating segmental and triangular pediments, above which five round windows with wide architraves and bold keystones, and the original cast-iron ceiling, complete the composition. The facade windows flanking the portico are arched on the first floor and rectangular above, all set in shallow reveals. The north elevation features a large Palladian window at the upper level, below which a round-arched doorway is flanked by cast-iron lamps mounted on wall brackets.

All secondary elevations of the building have slightly projecting center pavilions and follow the fenestration pattern of the facade. Windows are double-hung wood sash, fourteen over twelve lights on the first floor and eight over twelve lights in the upper stories. The building is capped by a low hipped roof, a full entablature, and a low parapet that breaks to form a shallow pediment above the portico.

The first floor of the interior has been extensively altered, mainly during renovations in 1960 and 1964 when the building was fitted for use as the Biloxi City Hall. A small glazed vestibule at the loggia entrance, the marble floors, and a cast-iron, oak, and marble stair constitute the remaining original features on the first floor. All second-floor spaces have been altered to some degree; the floors have been carpeted and the ceilings lowered. In spite of these changes, however, the second-floor courtroom with its floor-length windows, panelled wainscot, fluted Doric pilasters, and full entablature, is still an elegant chamber. Now used by the City Council, the courtroom originally featured a flat, coved ceiling which has been obscured by modern acoustical tiles.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

SPECIFIC DATES 1908		BUILDER/ARC	HITECT James Knox Ta	aylor
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 X_1900-	X_ARCHITECTURE ART COMMERCE COMMUNICATIONS	EDUCATION ENGINEERING EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT INDUSTRY INVENTION	MILITARY MUSIC PHILOSOPHY X_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN THEATER TRANSPORTATION OTHER (SPECIFY)
PERIOD PREHISTORIC 1400-1499 1500-1599	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC AGRICULTURE	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH COMMUNITY PLANNING CONSERVATION ECONOMICS	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LAW LITERATURE	RELIGION SCIENCE SCULPTURE

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building which now serves as the Biloxi City Hall is an important and welldocumented example of the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture that was widely adopted for monumental structures during the first decade of the twentieth century. Completed in 1908 as a federal building housing the U.S. Post Office, Court House, and Custom House, the structure is still the grandest edifice in downtown Biloxi. Significantly, it continues to serve a vital public function and to fulfill the 1905 prediction of the <u>Biloxi Daily Herald</u> that "The federal building will be a great ornament to this city and an incentive to still further and greater efforts along the same lines" (March 31, 1905, p. 5). The City of Biloxi's enlightened adaptation of the federal building for a City Hall has provided incentive for further preservation efforts in the community.

In 1902, the Commercial Club, the forerunner of the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce, began a concerted campaign to secure a "public building for Biloxi" (<u>Biloxi Daily</u> <u>Herald</u>, Jan. 7 and 29, 1902). On February 18, 1902, the <u>Biloxi Daily Herald</u> reported that "three members of the committee sent by the Commercial Club to Washington to testify for the Federal Building returned, hopeful of positive outcome." By February 2, 1902, the same paper was able to report that:

The Biloxi Commercial Club received a telegram yesterday from Congressman E. J. Bowers that the contract had been let for the Federal Building and construction will begin soon. Standard Construction Company of Chicago was the successful bidder at \$90,770.00. . . . [The building] will nearly take up the entire lot purchased for the site . . . a year ago from Mrs. C. F. Theobald for \$8,000.

The post office was able to move into its new quarters by March 31, 1908 (<u>Biloxi Daily</u> <u>Herald</u>, Mar. 27, 1908), but the building was not completed until several months later, in time for a formal dedication ceremony on August 18, 1908 (<u>Biloxi Daily Herald</u>, Aug. 17 and 18, 1908).

When the building contract was signed February 1, 1905, the proposed completion date for the Biloxi federal building was May 5, 1906; but construction delays, including hurricanes, a yellow fever epidemic, supply failures, and incompetent subcontractors, slowed the undertaking. Victor DeProsse, the federal superintendent of construction, was finally able to report that the building was "completed satisfactorily" on June 30, 1908 (DeProsse Correspondence).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

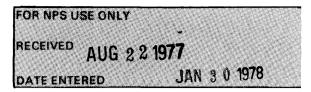
Withey, Elsie R. and Henry F. <u>Biographical Dictionary of American Architects</u> (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc. 1970, p. 592.

Biloxi (Mississippi) Daily Herald. 1902-1908.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 1

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Built during the tenure of James Knox Taylor (1857-c. 1929) as supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury (1897-1912), the U.S. Post Office, Court House, and Custom House building (now City Hall) in Biloxi was stylistically in the mainstream of the academic tradition of the early twentieth century. It survives as an excellent example of the Neo-Classical Revival style and is still unquestionably the most monumental building in Biloxi. As a public building, its construction was well documented through photographs and correspondence that augment the importance of the structure to the study of monumental architecture in America.

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

DeProsse, Victor. Correspondence concerning construction of the U.S. Post Office, Court House, and Custom House at Biloxi, Mississippi. 1905-1908. City of Biloxi, Mississippi.