

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

AUG 22 1977

DATE ENTERED

JAN 30 1978

**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

U.S. Post Office, Court House, and Custom House

AND/OR COMMON

Biloxi City Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

216 Lameuse

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fifth

STATE

Mississippi

VICINITY OF

CODE

28

COUNTY

Harrison

CODE

047

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

___DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

___AGRICULTURE

___MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

___PRIVATE

___UNOCCUPIED

___COMMERCIAL

___PARK

___STRUCTURE

___BOTH

___WORK IN PROGRESS

___EDUCATIONAL

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

___ENTERTAINMENT

___RELIGIOUS

___OBJECT

___IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

___SCIENTIFIC

___BEING CONSIDERED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___INDUSTRIAL

___TRANSPORTATION

___NO

___MILITARY

___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Biloxi

STREET & NUMBER

216 Lameuse

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

STATE

Mississippi

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk
Harrison County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 544

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

STATE

Mississippi

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE The Buildings of Biloxi:
An Architectural Survey

DATE

1976

___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Biloxi City Library

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

STATE

Mississippi

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
___1800-1899	___COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1908

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

James Knox Taylor

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building which now serves as the Biloxi City Hall is an important and well-documented 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 Biloxi Daily Herald 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" (Biloxi Daily Herald, Jan. 7 and 29, 1902). On February 18, 1902, the Biloxi Daily Herald 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 (Biloxi Daily Herald, Mar. 27, 1908), but the building was not completed until several months later, in time for a formal dedication ceremony on August 18, 1908 (Biloxi Daily Herald, 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 DeProse, the federal superintendent of construction, was finally able to report that the building was "completed satisfactorily" on June 30, 1908 (DeProse Correspondence).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Biloxi (Mississippi) Daily Herald. 1902-1908.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	3 1 8 8 5 0	3 3 6 4 3 3 6 3 0 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the southeast corner of Lameuse and E. Jackson streets, the Biloxi City Hall property line follows south along Lameuse for 137' then east for 168' then north 137' to E. Jackson then west 168' to point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Elizabeth P. Reynolds, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

June, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elmer B. Hilliard

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

July 26, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

W. M. ...

DATE

1.30.78

DATE

1.30.78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 22 1977
DATE ENTERED	JAN 30 1978

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.