

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION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

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☒ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Biloxi

STREET & NUMBER

216 Lameuse

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

VICINITY OF

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 ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Biloxi City Library

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

STATE

Mississippi

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
☒ EXCELLENT	☐ DETERIORATED	☐ UNALTERED	☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ GOOD	☐ RUINS	☒ ALTERED	☐ MOVED DATE _____
☐ FAIR	☐ 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	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER	
☐ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION	
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		☐ INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	1908	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	James Knox Taylor
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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 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. 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 X

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 ARCHEOLOGY 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

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CONTINUATION SHEET

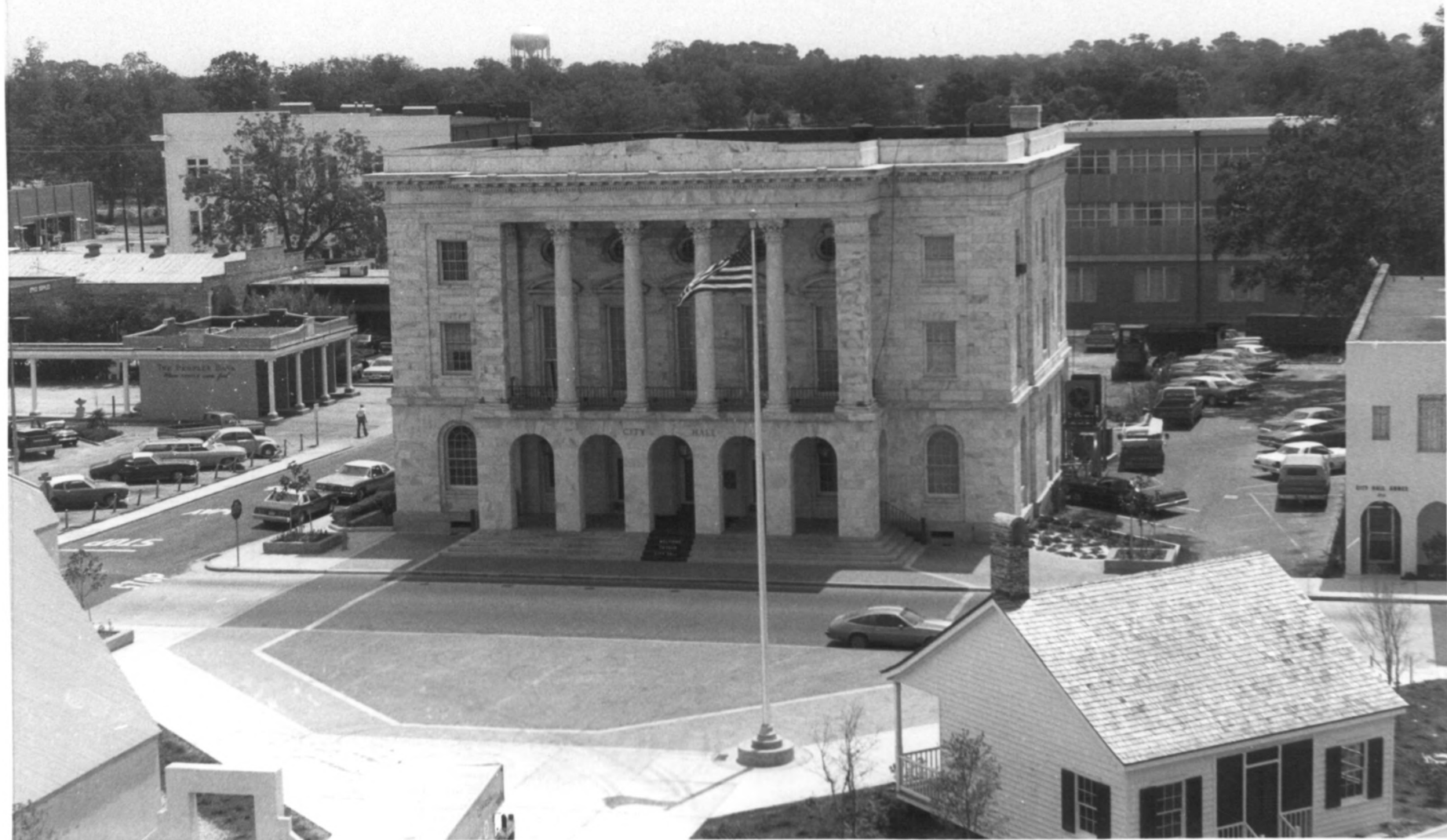
ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 1

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.



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

PHOTO NO. 1 - BILOXI CITY HALL

Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

Carlos Faul

222 Pat Harrison Avenue

JAN 30 1978

Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Copy negative in possession of

Mississippi Department of Archives

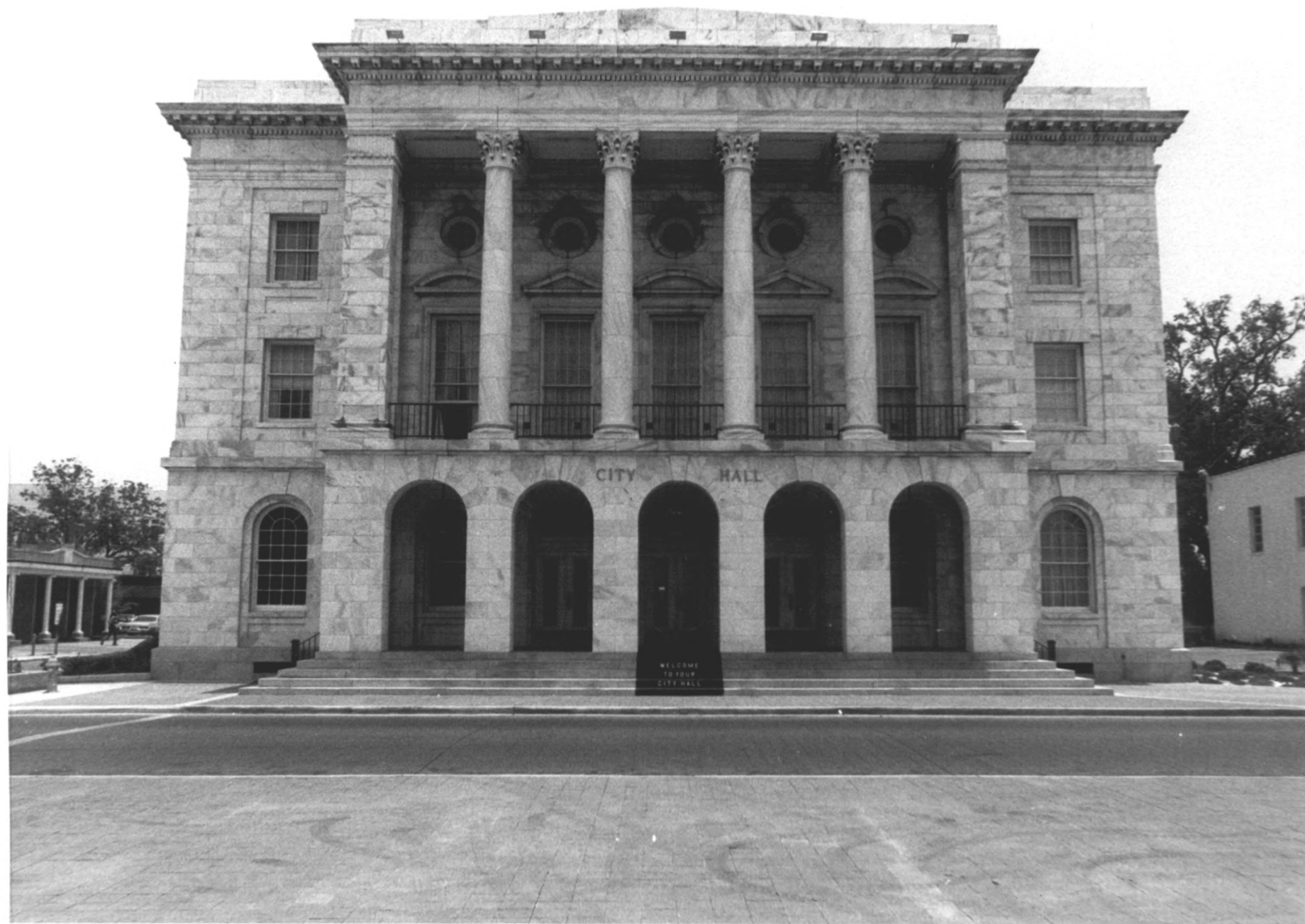
and History

July, 1977

General view, from southwest

AUG 22 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



U.S. Post office, Courthouse and Custom House

PHOTO NO. 2 - BILOXI CITY HALL

Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

Carlos Faul

222 Pat Harrison Avenue

Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Copy negative in possession of

Mississippi Department of Archives

and History

July, 1977

West facade of building, looking east

AUG 22 1977

JAN 30 1978

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER