

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Gillis House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

513 East Beach Boulevard

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fifth

STATE

Mississippi

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: None**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Biloxi

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall, 216 Lameuse Street

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 39530

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.Office of the Chancery Clerk
Harrison County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 544

CITY, TOWN

Biloxi

STATE

Mississippi 39530

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1940

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20540

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☒ FAIR
☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE
☒ MOVED DATE 1977

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gillis House is a one-and-a-half-story, frame structure, sixty-three feet deep and seventy-nine feet wide. It rests on brick piers four feet high and faces south toward the Gulf of Mexico. Beneath the hip roof with its slightly kicked eaves, the clapboard walls of the buildings are recessed ten feet on each side to form a surrounding gallery featuring simple railings and slender posts with turned, columnar upper sections. The gallery posts divide each elevation into seven bays, with the walls of the house occupying the center five bays. French windows, equipped with louvered shutters, occupy all bays except for those in the center of the front and rear elevations, which contain similar entrance ways, each composed of a single-leaf door, side lights, transom, and an enframing architrave. The front entrance is further accented by two Ionic columns set on each side of the door.

The matched doorways open to a high-ceilinged central hall, which in 1882 was used as a dining and sitting room. On each side of the hall are two bedrooms, separated by a smaller room which is divided into two closets, one opening to the bedrooms and the other to the hall. Each bedroom is equipped with a separate chimney and fireplace. The wooden mantelpieces vary in detail, although all have flanking Greek Ionic columns beneath a full entablature broken "en ressaut." Other interior trim, such as cornices, baseboards, and window architraves, exhibits Greek Revival profiles.

Four outbuildings, all clapboard, one-story structures, are located to the rear (north) of the house. Two of these are symmetrically placed facing the house and flanking its main axis. Each measures forty feet by twenty-six feet and has full-length galleries recessed on the south and north sides beneath a gable roof. A third outbuilding, located between the house and the eastern galleried outbuilding, measures twelve feet square beneath a hip roof with projecting, flared eaves. The fourth building, the carriage house, is located behind (north of) the western galleried outbuilding. It has two double-leaf doors on the eastern side and a gable roof. Some of these buildings are probably those which an 1882 inventory for the property lists as "Kitchen," "bed room adjoining," "Dairy," "Store Room," "Carriage House," and "Old carriage house bed room."

Alterations to the original house have been minor, involving the addition of elements which have left the basic structure unchanged. These alterations include the addition of a room in each corner of the gallery (some of these rooms were added before 1882); the additional projection of the flared eaves on all sides of the building; the attachment of a shed across the rear of the building; the division of the upper floor into rooms (after 1882); the placement of an exterior stair on the west gallery (possibly original); the addition of dormers, two on the front and rear slopes and one on each side (possibly original); the construction of the present carriage house; and the partial enclosure (and possibly the construction) of the rear (north) galleries on two of the outbuildings.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
X 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Resort Life
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gillis House is one of only a few houses remaining from the early nineteenth century to illustrate the importance of Biloxi as a summer home for New Orleans residents whose wealth was based on cotton speculation. The house possesses an unusually complete array of service buildings and an architecture which combines Greek Revival details with an overall Federal grace and with earlier French architectural adaptations to the climate of the Gulf Coast.

Although the physical evidence of the house allows a construction date anywhere between 1820 and 1860, documentary evidence gives slight preference to a construction date before 1838. In 1838, Thomas Bassett of New Orleans sold the property for \$3,500 to the widowed Mrs. Gilbert (Eliza McNeil) Vance (1798-1882), also of New Orleans. In 1870, Mrs. Vance bought an adjoining lot for \$2,000. In 1884, her estate sold the property to Richard Loeliger of New Orleans for \$5,250. The devaluation probably indicates that Mrs. Vance did not make any substantial improvements, such as the construction of a new house, during her ownership.

Auguste Bohn, who bought the property from Loeliger in 1888, was a New Orleans cotton factor like Loeliger and Mrs. Vance's son, Hamilton. Thus the house served as the summer home of the families of New Orleans cotton factors from 1838 until the Bohn daughter, Mrs. L. V. (Lucille) Gillis, inherited the property after her mother's death in 1927. The history of the house shows that, although the area around Biloxi did not support the cultivation of cotton, it did receive indirect economic benefit from the industry by serving as the watering place for cotton speculators from New Orleans.

The Gillis House resembles eighteenth-century French colonial structures in its provisions for the warm climate. It is basically a raised cottage exhibiting the typical gallery recessed beneath an almost pyramidal roof. It is, however, even further adapted to the climate: the gallery completely surrounds the main structure, the ceilings are high, the central hall is oriented to catch the ocean breezes, and all bedrooms open to the gallery on two sides and to the hall on another. The wide-spaced, slender posts give the building an almost Federal, light and graceful air, relating it to the 1778 Madame John's Legacy in New Orleans. The entrance doorways and some details of the woodwork match those found on other Biloxi buildings of the first half of the nineteenth century. The architecture of the Gillis House well illustrates the French background of Biloxi, its ties with New Orleans as a part of that culture, local details of construction, and area-wide solutions to life in the climate of the Gulf Coast.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 & 8 PAGE 1

Gillis House, Harrison County, Mississippi

6 - REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

1972 x state

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Jackson Mississippi 39205

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Necessitated by the imminent construction of a major access road between Interstate 10 and U.S. Highway 90, the relocation of the Gillis House from the interstate right-of-way to 513 East Beach Boulevard was effected in July-September of 1977. The house and outbuildings, assembled on the new site to duplicate their original arrangement, now occupy the large, beachfront lot of the city-owned, late-nineteenth-century Howard House that was totally destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. The Howard property, with its impressive collection of lush, spreading live oaks, offers a sympathetic and authentic setting for the former summer house, since the neighborhood is predominantly residential. The new location is in marked contrast to the undistinguished and dense commercial development now surrounding the original site. The moving of the Gillis House and its outbuildings to grounds more representative of their original context has reestablished the integrity lost by insensitive zoning and stewardship. Upon completion of a restoration program projected over the next several years, the city of Biloxi anticipates a public use for the property, as yet undetermined but incorporating the significance of the complex as an interpretation of nineteenth-century Gulf Coast resort life.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Biloxi-Gulfport (Mississippi) Daily Herald, April 14, 1927.

Cohen's New Orleans and Lafayette Directory, 1849, p. 177; 1850, p. 163; 1851, p. 191, 233; 1855, p. 33; 1858, p. 27.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.17

QUADRANGLE NAME Biloxi Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 319730 3363270

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A lot on the northeast corner of East Beach Boulevard and Bellman Street, being 223 feet by 620 feet.

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 Ronald W. Miller, Architectural Historian

Mary McCahon Shoemaker, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

March 8, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

P. O. Box 571

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Jackson

Mississippi 39205

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 R. Millard

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 10, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Gillis House, Harrison County, Mississippi

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gardner and Wharton's New Orleans Directory, 1858, pp. 288, 377.

Gardner's New Orleans Directory, 1859, pp. 43, 294; 1860, pp. 59, 233, 414;
1866, pp. 91-92, 448; 1868, p. 69.

Graham's Crescent City Directory, 1857, pp. 104, errata, p. 432; 1867, p. 104.

Harrison County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Book 1:362-64. Mississippi
Department of Archives and History. Microfilm.

Harrison County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Book 20:192-93. Mississippi
Department of Archives and History. Microfilm.

Harrison County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Deed Book 23:222. Mississippi
Department of Archives and History.

Harrison County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Inventory: Appraisement of
Movables and Personal Property, no. 350, Succession of Mrs. Eliza Vance,
September 25, 1882.

Mygatt and Company's New Orleans Directory, 1857, p. 284.

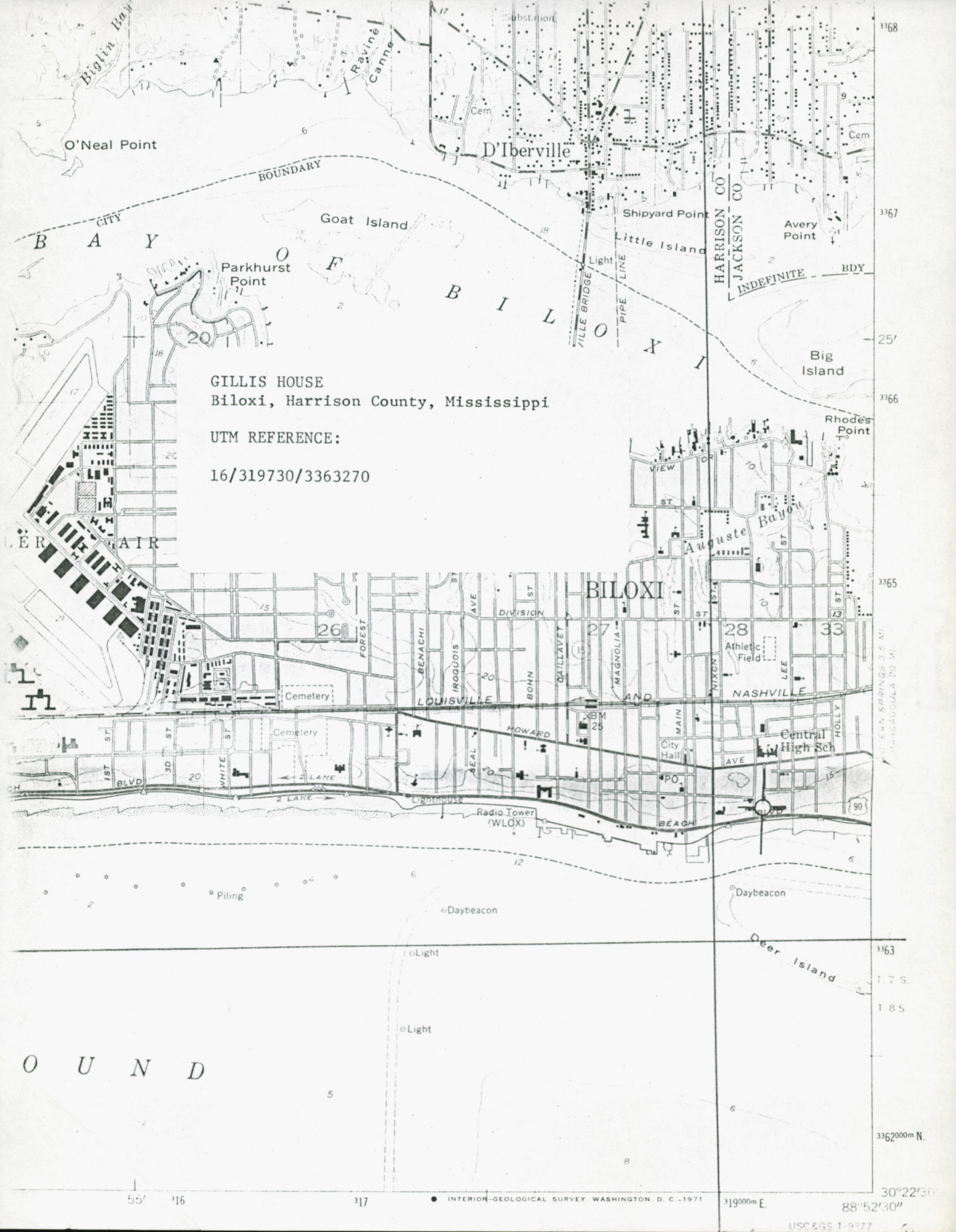
New Orleans Commercial Bulletin, February 20, 1838.

New Orleans Picayune, July 18, 1882.

Personal Inspection of Gillis House by Ronald W. Miller, architectural historian,
Mississippi Department of Archives and History, August 2, 1972.

Personal Inspection of Gillis House by Mary McCahon Shoemaker, architectural his-
torian, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, January 12, 1978.

Soard's New Orleans Directory, 1875, p. 146; 1880, pp. 153, 537; 1885, p. 162;
1890, pp. 175, 575; 1891, p. 171.



GILLIS HOUSE
Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

UTM REFERENCE:
16/319730/3363270

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section: Amendment Page: 1

Gillis House
Harrison County, Mississippi

Amendment for Purposes of Delisting Property From The National Register of Historic Places

The Gillis House, Harrison County, Mississippi was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 17 May 1973. The house was moved in the fall of 1977 resulting in delisting. An individual nomination was filed in 1978 and the house was listed individually on 7 July 1978. Since that date, the house has lost the qualities which originally caused it to be listed. The house was destroyed on August 29, 2005 by Hurricane Katrina and should be delisted.

Resource
Gillis House

Address
590 Beach Boulevard
Biloxi, MS

Section 11:

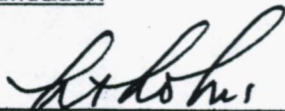
Form Prepared By:

William M. Gatlin, Architectural Historian
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205-0571
601-576-6940

Date: February 8, 2008

Section 2:

Certification



State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 5-19-2008



PHOTO NO. 1 - GILLIS HOUSE

Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

January, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Former location of the Gillis House, 806 West
Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Mississippi. From
the south.



PHOTO NO. 2 - GILLIS HOUSE

Biloxi, Harrison County, Mississippi

Mary McCahon Shoemaker

January, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Southern elevation or facade of the Gillis
House at its new location, 513 East Beach
Boulevard, Biloxi, Mississippi. From
the south.