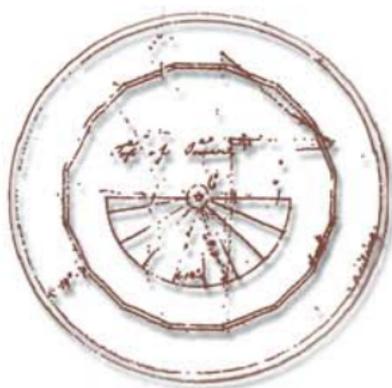
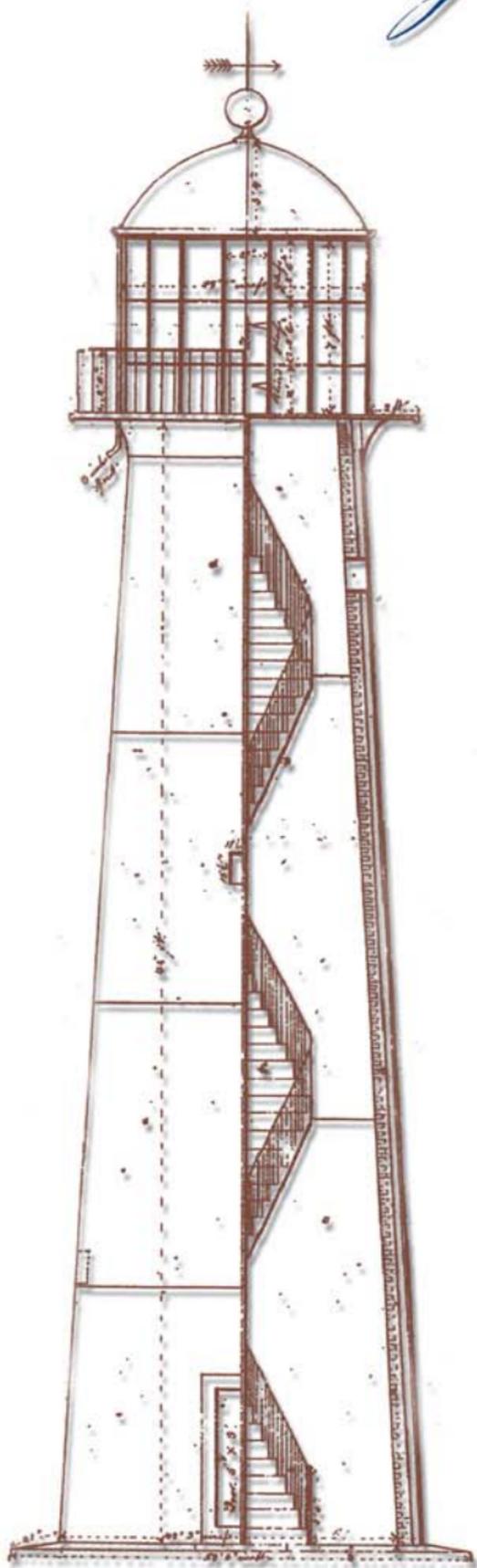
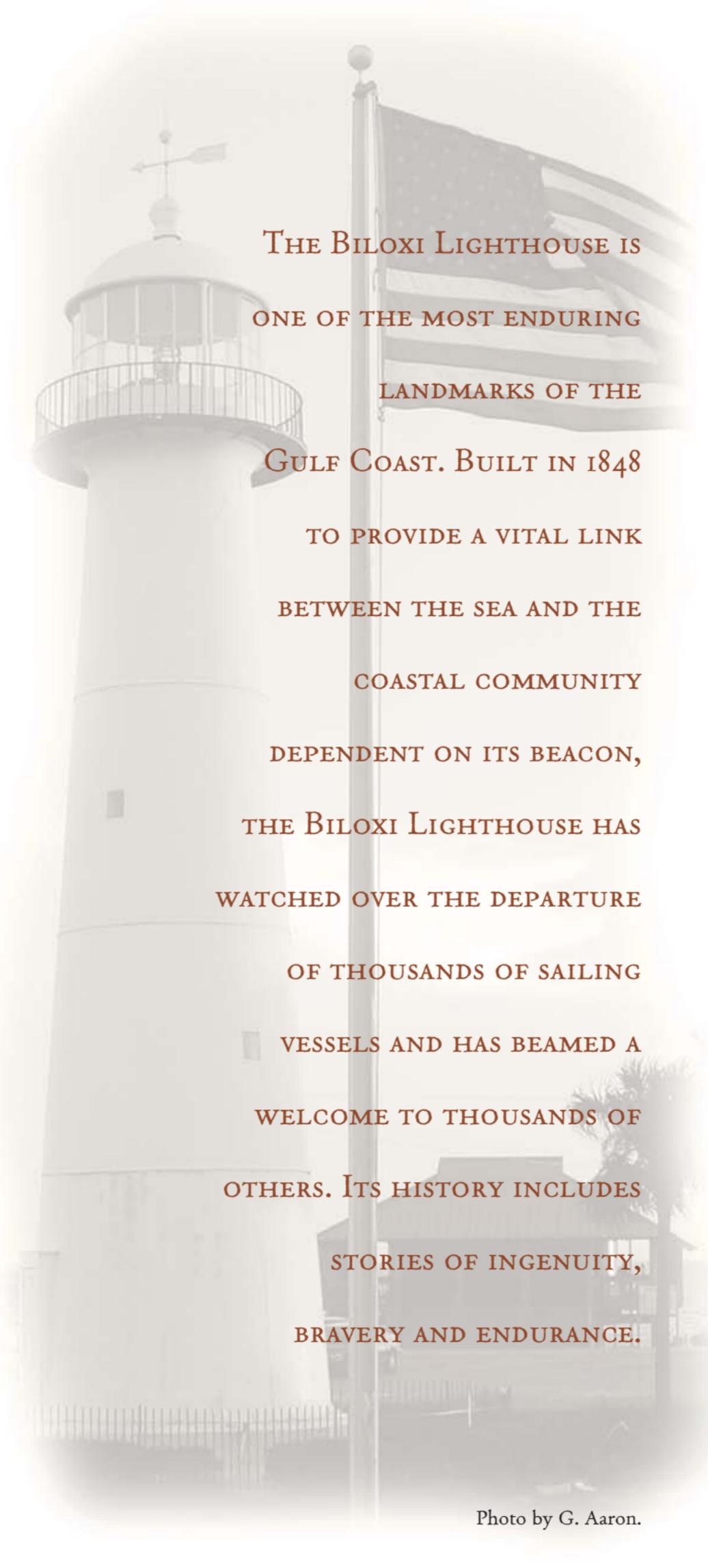


The
Biloxi
Lighthouse



Lighthouse
Biloxi, Miss.



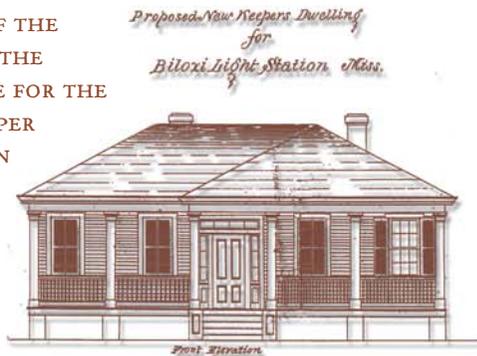
THE BILOXI LIGHTHOUSE IS
ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING
LANDMARKS OF THE
GULF COAST. BUILT IN 1848
TO PROVIDE A VITAL LINK
BETWEEN THE SEA AND THE
COASTAL COMMUNITY
DEPENDENT ON ITS BEACON,
THE BILOXI LIGHTHOUSE HAS
WATCHED OVER THE DEPARTURE
OF THOUSANDS OF SAILING
VESSELS AND HAS BEAMED A
WELCOME TO THOUSANDS OF
OTHERS. ITS HISTORY INCLUDES
STORIES OF INGENUITY,
BRAVERY AND ENDURANCE.



The design of the Biloxi Lighthouse called for a structural system of cast iron plating with an inner lining of brick for strength and stability. Only one cast iron lighthouse had been built in America, and some people thought the plan to use this relatively new material was risky.

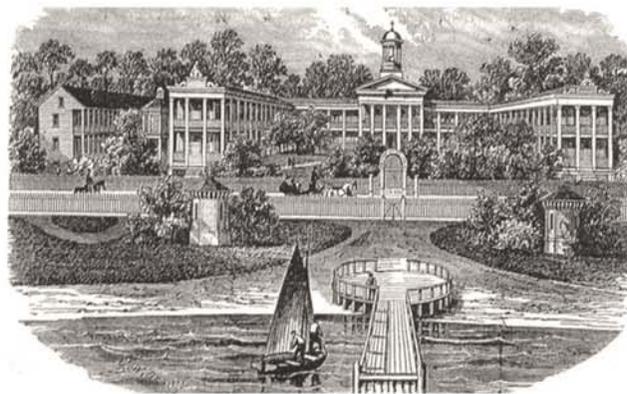
The \$12,000 contract to build the Lighthouse was awarded to Murray and Hazelhurst of Baltimore, Maryland, a company that built the finest steam engines to power railroad locomotives, factories and ships.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE LIGHTHOUSE AND THE ADJACENT COTTAGE FOR THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER WAS COMPLETED IN ONLY SIX WEEKS. THE LIGHT AT BILOXI BEGAN TO SHINE IN MAY OF 1848.



The Biloxi Lighthouse was built to aid ships in navigating the Mississippi Sound, which was then the primary entrance to the port of New Orleans, America's busiest seaport. The Lighthouse also revealed the narrow channel leading from the Sound due north to the city's small harbor on the front beach. This shallow and tricky route was critical for packets and steamboats to ship and deliver goods and services to the thriving community. Along with the freight came daily shipments of the U.S. Mail and steadily increasing numbers of passengers. As early as the 1830s, Biloxi was a summer retreat for residents of New Orleans who escaped the steamy streets of the city and flocked to the cooler breezes of the Gulf Coast.

By the time the Lighthouse was built, Biloxi was already a bustling resort.



From its completion in 1848 until the Lighthouse was automated in 1939, only six people are known to have held the title of Keeper of the Biloxi Lighthouse. The most important contributions over this period were made by three remarkable women who maintained the light for 74 of the Light's 91 years of manned service: Mary Reynolds; Marie Younghans; and, her daughter Mirandah Younghans. Marie Younghans became Lighthouse Keeper in 1867 following the death of her husband, and her fifty-two year career was one of the longest tenures in the history of the U.S. Lighthouse Service; she might have served longer, but she was forced to retire at age 77.



LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS MARIE YOUNGHANS (FAR LEFT), MIRANDAH YOUNGHANS (LEFT), AND W. D. THOMPSON (BELOW).



Biloxi Light after the Storm of September 20th, 1809.



History records the dates and names of more than two dozen hurricanes that have bedeviled the Gulf Coast at Biloxi, including some of the most deadly and most costly storms of all time, including the hurricanes of 1906, 1947, and Hurricane Camille in 1969. Before the 1920s, the Biloxi Lighthouse was located on the water's edge, and waves and storm surges often collapsed the breakwater protecting the structure's foundations.

Beginning as early as 1854, there were several attempts to protect the lighthouse with various forms of breakwaters, but none were successful.

In September 1860, the storm surge from a hurricane was strong enough to undermine its foundations. The damage was so great that the structure tipped some two feet off of vertical. The tilt was corrected in 1866 by excavating some of the sand under the foundation and letting gravity put the structure back to right, but the threat of a similar problem continued until a concrete breakwater was built along the waterfront in 1924.

The Biloxi Lighthouse is so important to its city and the region as a whole that when the U.S. Coast Guard took it out of service in 1967, the City of Biloxi stepped in and received its transfer to city hands in 1968. It has been operated by the city ever since as a Private Aid to Navigation, continuing to guide recreational boats and fishing vessels to safe harbor, as it has since 1848.





We invite you to explore this icon of our city,
and of the entire Gulf Coast...

The Biloxi Lighthouse is located on U. S. 90
at Porter Avenue, just 1/4 mile to the west of the
intersection of U.S. 90 and Interstate 110.

This brochure has been made possible through funding
provided by the Mississippi Tidelands Trust Fund.

Photographs courtesy of the Biloxi Public Library, Biloxi, Mississippi,
and the Randy Randazzo Postcard Collection, BPL.

Mayor A.J. Holloway
and the Biloxi City Council

George Lawrence • William “Bill” Stallworth
Charles T. Harrison Jr. • Mike Fitzpatrick • Tom Wall
Edward “Ed” Gemmill • David Fayard



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