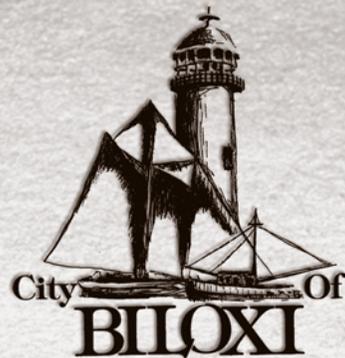


Find out more about Biloxi
by visiting us online at
biloxi.ms.us
or call the Visitors Center staff
at 1-800-BILOXI-3.



Mayor A.J. Holloway
and the
Biloxi City Council

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



The broom-riding witch rides atop the weathervane above Ellzey's Hardware on the Vieux Marché.

Photo courtesy of Peoples Bank.



Rue Magnolia walking mall in Downtown Biloxi.



Welcome to Biloxi, and thank you for your interest in our city. Our community traces its history back to 1699, when the French explorer Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville settled these shores.

Over the past three centuries, Biloxi has seen a great deal of growth, particularly in the past 10 years or so. However, our city remains dedicated to preserving and promoting our sense of place, our colorful past and the qualities that make our city unique.

The Downtown Walking Tour provides you a glimpse of our history and introduces you to some of the distinctive architecture of our city. In fact, several locations on the tour are described in best-selling author John Grisham's "The Runaway Jury."

Today, our downtown area, like so many across our country, is rebounding from the era of urban renewal, when many central business districts attempted to compete with suburban shopping malls by creating outdoor walking malls.

Today, you'll see structures that have been returned to their original grace and charm, and you'll see a few "works in progress."

You can cover the designated route in less than an hour, but make it a leisurely stroll. Pause to enjoy the offerings of the individual shops, museums and restaurants you'll find along the way. As you walk the tour, please be aware of vehicular traffic.

Thank you for visiting and enjoy your stay.

A.J. Holloway
Mayor



- 1** Biloxi Visitors Center
- 2** Fisherman's Cottage
- 3** Old Biloxi Library
- 4** Clemens House
- 5** Scherer House
- 6** Mary Mahoney's Old French House Restaurant
- 7** Magnolia Hotel

- 8** Rue Magnolia
- 9** Vieux Marché
- 10** Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 11** Saenger Theatre for the Performing Arts
- 12** Brown and Mitchell Inc.
- 13** Spanish Trail Books
- 14** BancorpSouth Building

- 15** Ellzey's Hardware
- 16** Peoples Bank Building
- 17** City Hall
- 18** Creole Cottage
- 19** Redding House
- 20** Biloxi Tricentennial Mosaic
- 21** Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art

1 Biloxi Visitors Center

Your tour begins at the Biloxi Visitors Center, known as the Brielmaier House (say Brill-mire) (c. 1895). This structure, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a treasure of Victorian detailing, with magnificent lattice work adorning its porch. The structure was donated to the city in 1982 and moved from 436 Main St. to its present location in 1986.

The Foretich House (c. 1905), immediately north of the Brielmaier House, is a fine example of a lateral wing shotgun house with a wrap-around gallery.

Out on the Town Green itself, you'll notice a raised platform encircling a live oak tree. The platform is known locally as a "shoo-fly." At one time, these structures were common in the yards of grand homes overlooking the waterfront. Because of their height off the ground, they provide respite from pesky flies and gnats, and helped visitors appreciate cool gulf breezes. Most, alas, have been destroyed by hurricanes over the years.

• Walk a half block north on Lameuse Street to the next location on the tour.

2 Fisherman's Cottage

Lameuse Street was the main thoroughfare during the antebellum period, when most visitors arrived in Biloxi by water. On the right is the Fisherman's Cottage (c. 1905), at 122 Lameuse St. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this privately owned Creole cottage-type structure is typical of those built by Biloxi's fishermen around the turn-of-the-century. It has some of the most decorative woodwork of the city's historic structures.

• Walk a few feet north for the next location.



3 Old Biloxi Library

The richly designed masonry structure on the right is the finest Spanish Colonial Revival building in Biloxi (c. 1924). It served as the city's public library until 1977 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The main doorway, with its twisted columns, embellished spandrels, full entablature and cartouche, along with the twin flights of stairs and curvilinear gables, all add to the richness of this building. Today, it is privately owned and houses professional offices.

• Walk a half block west on Water Street for the next location.



4 Clemens House

Walking west on Water Street, another of Biloxi's historic thoroughfares, you'll pass the Clemens House (c. 1846-52) at 764 Water St. Privately owned, this home (now an office) was built during the city's bustling antebellum tourism period. A full entablature around the gallery, with a gothic molded architrave, a plain frieze, and a fine cornice add to the quality of the house.

• Continue walking westward on Water Street, cross G.E. Ohr Street and continue a half block for the next location.



5 Scherer House

A short distance to the west at 782 Water St. is the privately owned Scherer House (c. 1840), also known as the Spanish House. This structure features solid brick stuccoed walls, stepped gables and interior end chimneys. It is listed on the National Register and

is considered a major city landmark. It is one of the few brick structures dating from the antebellum period.

• Continue walking west on Water Street. Next stop is several feet to the left.



6 Mary Mahoney's Old French House Restaurant

This structure (c. 1835-36), also known as the Brunet-Fourchy House, is especially important architecturally because it is one of the earliest documented buildings in Biloxi. It represents a decided New Orleans influence, particularly in its floor plan, which has four rooms and two chimneys, with one back-to-back fireplace in each room. This arrangement is merely a reorientation of the standard "Creole cottage" typical in New Orleans. Today, the structure is home to a popular restaurant and part of a complex that includes a 24-hour sidewalk cafe.

• After leaving Mary Mahoney's walk north on Rue Magnolia.



7 Magnolia Hotel

The building at 119 Rue Magnolia (c. 1847) is the oldest tangible remainder of the early days of the resort industry in Biloxi, and as such, one of the most historic buildings on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Magnolia Hotel, with its



mortised, tenoned and pegged frame, brick-between posts construction and wide galleries, is an important evocation of the early forms of building on the Mississippi Coast, particularly hotel structures. No longer used as a hotel, the bottom floor of this antebellum building hosts the city's Mardi Gras Museum, where you can trace the colorful history of Coast Carnival. The second floor houses municipal offices.

• Next step is directly east of the Magnolia Hotel.

8 Rue Magnolia

Rue Magnolia contains a variety of Neoclassical and Victorian wood frame structures (c. 1900-1910) flanking both sides of the walkway. Pleasing structures, most have been adapted for use as professional offices or shops. You'll also see two city parks, Mary Mahoney Park and Margaret Tremmel Peresich Park.

• Continue walking north, cross Jackson Street and pass the caboose and continue to where Rue Magnolia meets Vieux Marche, a one-way street running east-west.

9 Vieux Marché

Extending east and west at this point is a segment of Biloxi's earliest thoroughfare, the Pass Christian-Point Cadet Road. Later named Howard Avenue, this two-block section was the heart of downtown Biloxi and featured numerous department stores, banks, theaters and two-way traffic. Under urban renewal movement in the late 1970s, the area was closed to vehicular traffic and given its current French name, which means Old Market. The street itself is also called Vieux Marche. Numerous Victorian buildings dating from the 1890s survived and flank both sides of the street. They are a poignant reminder of a once thriving commercial and cultural district of that period. Today, one-way traffic has returned to the street, and restoration efforts are continuing. Most buildings house professional offices, where many owners are working to restore the heart of Biloxi's downtown area to its historical grandeur.

• Walk west on Vieux Marche, cross Reynoir Street and continue for a half block, where you'll find your next stop.

10 Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dedicated Sept. 8, 1902, this fine example of late Gothic Revival architecture was built to replace an 1870 church destroyed by fire.

Gothic detail is legion, with numerous lancet windows of all sizes and study buttresses at every corner, separating the bays of the side facades. The exquisite stained glass windows, imported from Germany, were installed in 1906. The church, which is the Cathedral for the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

• Walk east, turning north on Reynoir Street and walk a half block for your next stop.



11 Saenger Theatre for the Performing Arts

This eclectic style structure (c. 1929) was at the forefront of theatre design when it opened, hosting traveling shows and vaudeville, and the new novelty of “talking pictures.” The theatre is owned by the City of Biloxi, which in the past several years has spent millions restoring the showplace to its original splendor. Today, it is listed on the

National Register of Historic Places and hosts nearly two dozen local performing arts groups, including the Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra.

- Walk south on Reynoir Street, turning east into the Vieux Marche. Continue a half block to your next stop.

12 Brown and Mitchell Inc.

The building at 796 Howard Ave. (c. 1898) features one of two distinctive cupolas in downtown Biloxi. The building's fine detail and strong form add elegance to the downtown streetscape. The stucco walls and renaissance detail also stylistically link this building to the next building on the tour. Over the years, it has served as a bar and pool hall, and local jewelry store and today is home to a local engineering firm.

- Continue eastward in the Vieux Marche for a half-block for your next location.



13 Spanish Trail Books

The building at 781 Howard Ave. (c. 1893-1898) was listed as a general store in 1898. The building, which underwent a major restoration in the early 1990s, has retained most of its exterior detail and demonstrates Italianate influence. Today it is home to Spanish Trail Books. Go in and browse. The shopkeeper is always ready to talk about the building's history.

- Continue eastward a half-block on Vieux Marche for your next location.

14 BancorpSouth Building

In 2005, BancorpSouth completed a renovation of this building (c. 1899). Because of major alterations of the original structure and especially the façade over the years, much of the original building's historical details were destroyed. Thus, this renovation attempts to make the façade reminiscent of the original appearance as the Dukate's Theater. The Renaissance-style theater was commissioned by Biloxi resident W.K.M. Dukate and designed by a German New Orleans architect

Theodore Brune, who was also the architect of Nativity BVM Cathedral, also on the downtown tour. The building, now the bank's downtown Biloxi headquarters, features a tripartite composition of one central dominate element flanked by two smaller parts.

- Continue eastward on Vieux Marche, stopping at Lameuse Street for your next location.

15 Ellzey's Hardware

The eastern end of the Vieux Marche, at 750 Howard Ave., is anchored by a Victorian styled structure (c. 1896) that was the original Peoples Bank Building. Included among the original specifications for the building were that the tower roof be covered with “copper Spanish type tile,” and topped by an ornamental copper weathervane. Today, the building reflects a major restoration undertaken by its owners, The Peoples Bank. The building's ground floor houses a local hardware store, Ellzey's, with law offices on its second floor. And the weathervane atop the spire of the building? It depicts a broom carrying a witch on a crescent moon. As you walk southward from the building, look up at the roof and see if you can spot the gargoyle (it's to the left of the weathervane).

- Walk south on Lameuse Street several feet for your next location.

16 Peoples Bank Building

Diagonally across Lameuse Street is the present Peoples Bank building (c. 1913). This finely detailed structure has served as a bank building since 1924. Two tall Ionic columns frame the two-story inset entrance. The doorway itself has a fine Renaissance-style segmental pediment. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Continue south on Lameuse Street, cross Jackson Street for your next location.

17 City Hall

At 140 Lameuse St. is Biloxi City Hall (c. 1905-1908), one of the best examples of the Neoclassical Revival in the South. The building was originally the Biloxi Federal Building, housing a U.S. Post Office, court house and customs house. The building, of brick bearing wall construction, is faced with a fine grayish white marble. The main façade is dominated by a grand hexastyle portico of a streamlined Corinthian order, supported on an arcade. The arched motif is carried



around the building by arched windows and fanlights over the doors. The five tall windows behind the portico on the second floor are full length and are capped by classical pediments. The main feature of the north side of the building is a fine large Palladian window that lights an interior stair. Inside, you'll find marble floors and original woodwork, and on the second floor, the former courtroom now houses the City Council chamber, where giant fluted Doric order pilasters adorn the room.

- Your next location is across the street from City Hall.

18 Creole Cottage

Directly across from City Hall is the Creole Cottage (c. 1830-1870). Originally located near the waterfront on Lameuse Street, this vernacular structure, a typical early tourist cottage, was strongly influenced by the architecture of South Louisiana. In 1905, it became the first permanent, regularly operated, free public library in Mississippi.

- After viewing this building go north on Lameuse Street, turn west on Jackson Street and go a half block to your next location.

19 Redding House

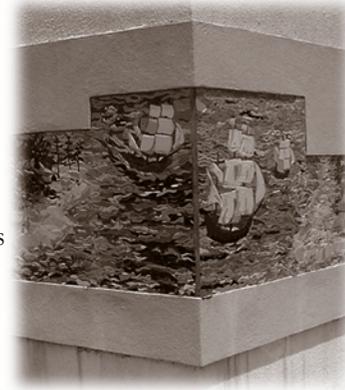
The building (c. 1908) at 770 Jackson St. is one of the finest Colonial Revival houses remaining in Biloxi. Built for Charles Redding, a prominent Biloxi businessman, this house is a marvel in its complexity of design and fine detail. A prime feature is its use of circular motifs, particularly in the forms of its porches and projecting bay of the west façade. Today, the Redding House hosts receptions and special events, and serves lunch weekdays.

- Walk south on G.E. Ohr Street a half block for your next location.

20 Biloxi Tricentennial Mosaic

This mosaic is a lasting reminder of Biloxi's Tricentennial, which was celebrated in 1999. Families from Biloxi and neighboring communities provided ideas for different sections of the mosaic, and local artist Elizabeth Veglia, with the assistance of Mary Wager, then crafted those ideas into the mosaic. The mosaic was a project of the Biloxi Tricentennial Commission.

- Walk south several feet on G.E. Ohr Street for your next location.



21 Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art

The museum, at 136 G.E. Ohr St., celebrates the life and work of renowned late 19th century potter George Ohr. Ohr described himself as “Unequaled. Unrivaled. Undisputed. The Greatest Potter on Earth.” Many agree. On display is the largest permanent public exhibition of Ohr's work in the United States.

- This ends the Downtown Walking Tour. To return to the Visitors Center, walk south on G.E. Ohr Street, turn east on Water Street, then turn south on Lameuse Street. The Visitors Center is a block south on Lameuse Street.

Much of the background information in this guide is from “The Buildings of Biloxi: An Architectural Survey.” The 182-page illustrated guide, which was first published in 1976 and updated in 2000, is available for purchase (\$15) at the Biloxi Visitors Center.