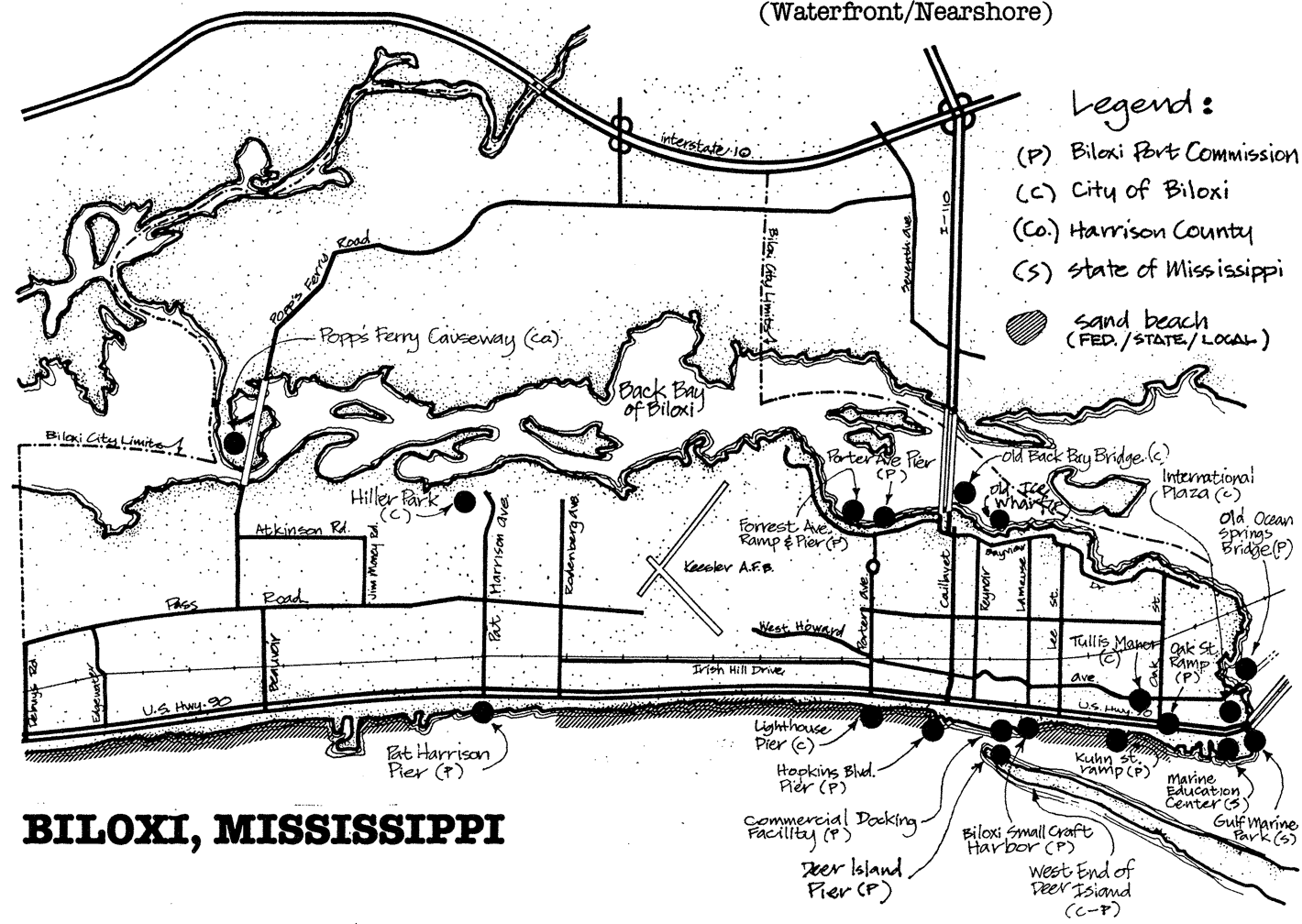


Major Public Facilities (Waterfront/Nearshore)



BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi Development History

- 16th century - Indian Village
- 17th century - Territory explored by French and Spanish
- 1699 French Settlement
- 1720 Capital of Louisiana Territory
- 1723 French Capital moved to New Orleans
- 1763 Gulf Coast ceded to Great Britain
- 1779 Gulf Coast ceded to Spain
- 1810 Biloxi became part of U.S. and Mississippi Territory
- 1817 Mississippi became 20th state

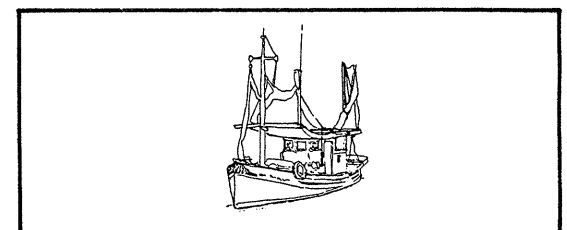
- 1838 Biloxi incorporated as a town in Hancock County
- 1840 Biloxi became a popular resort
- 1859 Biloxi re-incorporated as a town in Harrison County
- 1872 New Orleans and Mobile Railroad Built
- 1881 Seafood canneries established on Point Cadet and Back Bay
- 1889 Waterworks system established
- 1893 Electric Light Co. established; all principal streets paved with shells; Major Hurricane destroys seafood fleet and most canneries
- 1895 Street car franchise granted
- 1896 Telephone franchise granted
- 1900 Biloxi known as seafood capital of World
- Fire destroys most of downtown
- 1901 First Back Bay Bridge completed
- 1905 Natural gas franchise granted
- 1906 Major Hurricane destroys waterfront and much upland timber
- 1912 Most infrastructure and institutions in place: street cars, paved streets, artesian wells and complete water distribution; electric plant, high school and four elementary schools; three state banks; country clubs and yacht club
- 1918 Commission form of government adopted
- 1925 First seawall installed
- 1940 Keesler Air Force Base established
- 1947 Destructive Hurricane destroys waterfront
- 1950s Sand beach dredged in and U.S. Highway 90 four-laned.
- 1965 West Biloxi annexed to DeBuys Road doubling size and population
- 1969 Hurricane Camille: Worst in U.S. History
- 1977 Western part of North Biloxi annexed
- 1981 Strong mayor-council form of government adopted with seven city wards and mayor as the chief executive
- 1984 Marine Education Center of Gulf Coast Research Lab established on Point Cadet

Source: Various City Reports

Major highway access into Biloxi is provided along the beachfront by U.S. Highway 90, and to the north of the city limits by Interstate 10. The major north-south connection between these two is the I-110 spur. Plans have just been approved for construction of the portion of I-110 that serves the Biloxi peninsula, leading from the Back Bay bridge southward to Highway 90 in the Central Beach area.

Other major streets which serve as thoroughfares throughout the city include: Pass Road and Irish Hill Drive which run east-west; and running north-south: Oak Street, Lee Street, Main Street, Lameuse Street, Reynoir Street, Caillavet Street, Porter Avenue, Rodenburg Avenue, Harrison Avenue, Beauvoir Road, Popps Ferry Road, Edgewater Gulf Drive, and Debuys Road. These major arteries feed traffic to collector streets that funnel local traffic into the individual neighborhoods.

Rail freight service is provided to the Biloxi peninsula by a line that runs throughout the entire southern part of the peninsula that is operated and maintained by the Seaboard System (formerly L & N Railroad). Air passenger and freight service is



provided to the Biloxi area at the Gulfport/Biloxi Regional Airport located in Gulfport.

Water traffic is accommodated by a channel maintained at a depth of 12 feet which runs from Ship Island through the inter-coastal waterway to near the Biloxi Lighthouse, and then eastward around Biloxi's eastern tip. Another channel which services commercial and barge traffic on the Back Bay is also maintained at a depth of 12 feet. Waterfront access is provided to pleasure craft and smaller commercial boats with public launching ramps at the Small Craft Harbor, Kuhn Street, Oak Street and Forrest Avenue. The boat ramps are maintained by the Biloxi Port Commission. The Biloxi and Back Bay channels are maintained by the county development commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A number of piers are also maintained by the port commission throughout the city for pedestrian and fishing access. These include the piers at Harrison Avenue, Hopkins Boulevard, the Old Ice Wharf on Back Bay, Porter Avenue, Forrest Avenue, and the Old Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge. Other waterfront activities managed by the port commission include industrial sites near the Clay Point Industrial Park, ancillary facilities at the Small Craft Harbor, and loading areas at the Commercial Docking Facility.

The City of Biloxi built and maintains the new Lighthouse Fishing Pier. The city also maintains the old Back Bay (D'Iberville) Bridge as a fishing pier.

HERITAGE

Plans for waterfront development should take into account the cultural and historical heritage of Biloxi. Biloxians know that their town is different, in both obvious and subtle ways, from inland Mississippi. Biloxi's self-image (or cultural identity) is partly determined by the fact that Biloxians know how to work and play in a coastal environment. The environment has been the basis for the development of the seafood, tourism, and retirement industries, bringing to Biloxi various groups of people over the years for temporary visits or permanent settlement. These varied groups have each contributed to the local way of life and to the identity of the town.

An important component of the traditional lifestyle or "folklife" of Biloxi is connected with the water. The harvesting of seafood is a major part of this lifestyle, and many Biloxians possess traditional skills and knowledge in this area, such as boatbuilding or net-making, as well as all the knowledge that is necessary if one is to return from the Gulf or the Louisiana marshes with a good catch. Recreational fishing and boating are also part of the Biloxi lifestyle, as is the social enjoyment of seafood, from informal oyster-openings and shrimp boils to formal seafood banquets.

Biloxi's diverse ethnic groups, many of them drawn here by the water, have each contributed to and adapted to local styles in matters such as architecture, boatbuilding,

cooking, celebrations, recreation, beliefs, and attitudes. This section presents a brief, simplified overview of the historical and cultural heritage that is such an important part of Biloxi's identity.

History

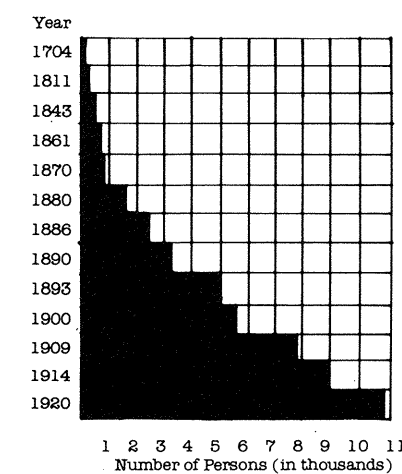
Biloxi began as a village of the Biloxi Indians, a tribe of the Sioux. In the 16th century, the area was explored by Hernando DeSoto of Spain and French explorer Robert Cavalier DeSalle.

A French settlement was established in 1699 by Pierre LeMoynes D'Iberville while under commission from the King of France to settle Louisiana. Biloxi served as the capital of the French territory from 1720 until 1723, when New Orleans was established.

The early French colonists led a rural life, existing by fishing, farming, and timber processing. Biloxi remained mostly French until coming under American authority in 1811 when it became part of the Mississippi territory.

Under American dominion, Biloxi began to grow as a resort. Its close proximity to New Orleans and its ease to water access made it a favorite place for summer visitors. Many prosperous businessmen and farmers had summer homes in Biloxi, while many more stayed in hotels and rental cottages. Biloxi was relatively unaffected by the Civil War, except for its bloodless capture by the Union fleet anchored off Ship Island. After the war, tourism continued as

Early Population Trends



Source: U.S. Census and City Reports

In the 1880's a new age of prosperity was ushered in by the establishment of the first seafood cannery. Others soon followed. Success meant many improvements and new growth for the Biloxi area. By the turn of the century, Biloxi became known as the "the seafood capital of the world." The area's prominence in the seafood industry attracted many people from coastal communities of other states and nations to work in the fisheries of the Gulf Coast. Biloxi became a melting pot of many ethnic groups whose customs still largely influence Biloxi's culture.

Today Biloxi still has a diverse economy lead by tourism. Its strategic coastal location has attracted military installations, like Keesler Technical Training Center (USAF), which also make up a large part of the local economy. As the nation's population ages, Biloxi is becoming more attractive to the elderly as a retirement site.

Ethnic Groups

Over the last few years, Dr. Paige Gutierrez, a cultural anthropologist, has conducted detailed research on Biloxi's ethnic and cultural origins. The following discussion of ethnic groups is digested in part from her booklet, **The Cultural Legacy of Biloxi's Seafood Industry**.

Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of Biloxi's sociological makeup and

Biloxi's most important industry. The coming of the railroad in the 1870s increased the town's popularity even more and opened the door for industrial development.