

## ***Small Historic Towns across America.***

as presented by Mr. Stadt's on-line Freedom Project Education U.S. History classes in the Fall and Winter of 2014. You can learn more about our classes by visiting us at: [www.fpeusa.org](http://www.fpeusa.org)

### **Brief History of Biloxi, Mississippi**

Biloxi, Mississippi, has a history dating back to 1699 when it was founded by French settlers. They got the name from the native Indians that were living there, and soon became friends with the tribe. Since then, Biloxi has grown into the beautiful and prosperous city it is today. It is famous for thriving businesses such as shipping, seafood, tourism, and Casinos. Biloxi is known as the "Seafood Capital of the World". The area is also important to military and ship-building industries: Keesler Air Force Base is located in the heart of town while Naval Construction Battalion Center, Stennis Space Center, and Ingall's Ship-building are nearby. These industries boost Biloxi's economy.



The Gulf Coast, including Biloxi, was devastated by Hurricane Camille in 1969 and again by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It was also seriously damaged by the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill. With each disaster, the city of Biloxi has been able to recover and grow back even stronger. An example of Biloxi's resilience is how veterans are honored. Katrina destroyed the Gulf Coast Veterans' Home. But rebuilding it better than ever was a big priority so it happened fairly quickly. Also, Biloxi was a major participant in the "Honor Flight" program to send WWII and other veterans from the Gulf Coast to Washington D.C. so that they could visit their memorials. Biloxians have "heart".

### **Location and Driving Directions from closest major U.S. Airport.**

Biloxi is located on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico (the "Gulf Coast") in Harrison County, Mississippi. It lies between the cities of Gulfport and Ocean Springs. Biloxi is minutes away from the regional airport (GPT) in Gulfport. A major east-west interstate (I-10) highway runs through Biloxi. Within 90 minutes of driving, one can reach the Florida panhandle to the east, or New Orleans LA to the west.

### **Who was President when this town was founded? And, what was the political environment in America at that time?**

Biloxi was founded in 1699, even before the Continental Congress. There was no President at the time, as the first was in 1789. Biloxi was founded by the Frenchman Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville. At that time, European nations were competing for influence in the area. Opportunities such as land-claiming, settling, fur-trading, and shipping were bringing many to the Gulf Coast and local government based on European principles began to get a foothold.

### **Oldest businesses/largest businesses today.**

One of Biloxi's oldest businesses is a restaurant called Mary Mahoney's. It was originally built as a house for the French in 1737. It has little known history behind it, but the house eventually turned into a restaurant in 1962. Keesler Air Force Base is the largest military employer, and Beau Rivage Resort & Casino is the biggest commercial employer. Kessler Air Force Base has around 11,276 employees, while Beau Rivage Resort & Casino has about 2,758.

## City government.

Biloxi has a Mayor-Council form of government. The mayor for Biloxi is A.J. Holloway (Republican party). He has been elected as mayor for six successive 4-year terms, making him Biloxi's longest serving mayor.

## Historic attractions in the area. Festivals and Events.

One major attraction is the Biloxi Lighthouse. The Biloxi Lighthouse was built in 1848 and was repainted several times. This building has survived through the Civil War and Hurricanes Camille and Katrina, which makes it so historic. Another attraction is Beauvoir, a house overlooking the Gulf Coast. It was built in 1852 by a man named James Brown, a rich land owner. In 1877, Jefferson Davis (former soldier and President of the Confederacy) moved to Beauvoir to write some books and papers. Although he expected his stay to be short, he fell in love with the house and eventually bought it.

When Davis died, Beauvoir was preserved to be a memorial for him.

It was heavily damaged by Katrina but was rebuilt. Mardi Gras is a big annual celebration in Biloxi. There are also many Festivals throughout the year as well as events at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum. Every fall, there is a 2-week long "Cruisin' the Coast", a popular meeting of classic car enthusiasts from all over the country.

(right)  
*Beauvoir*



(above)  
Biloxi Lighthouse

## Where can I stay if I visit Biloxi?

Whenever you are driving around Biloxi, there are numerous resorts and hotels that you can visit. According to one website, the average visitor to Biloxi usually stays for around 2.5 days, because there are many activities to do while cruising the town.

## Why would I want to visit Biloxi?

You would want to visit Biloxi mainly to have a fun time and explore the history behind it. The casinos there would serve you well, and the attractions are unique and very interesting to explore. Overall, you would enjoy your stay and will want to revisit it often!

## Links you may wish to visit:

<http://www.beauvoir.org/about/>

<http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/biloxi.html>