



**Lawrence “Moot” Billiot**  
**Boat Maker**

Today, when most people want a boat, they go to a marina or boat dealer and purchase a fiberglass or metal boat. But for a larger craft, hand-crafted from wood, one has to look a little harder for the skilled boat builders who can do the job. In the recent past, an individual could go to Mr. Lawrence Moot Billiot for such a project. Mr. Billiot, now deceased, was a skilled boat builder born 1916 from Dulac, Louisiana. Mr. Billiot, a French speaker, attested to his French background. Mr. Billiot built boats without the assistance of blueprints, using only the extensive knowledge stored in his head and the tools in his hands.

According to Mr. Billiot, "Steel boats require more maintenance than wooden boats. Steel boats must be chipped, and the rust must be sanded off before repainting, while a wooden boat just needs sanding and repainting." Mr. Billiot built several types of boats including a Lafitte skiff (47 feet long), a semi-V bottom, and numerous flat bottom boats. He occasionally built scale models of his full-size boats which he sold for about \$100. According to Mr. Billiot, "the V-bottom boats ride rough water more easily than a flat bottom. This is especially important to those who are going out into the Gulf to fish." It took Mr. Billiot approximately three months with good weather to build a boat 40-foot or more in length. His boats were made from cypress planks or marine plywood, and quite durable if they are maintained properly. The boats could be outfitted for shrimping or pleasure. And Mr. Lawrence Billiot took pleasure in building fine hand-crafted boats for his customers.

Mr. Billiot participated in the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Fair in 1981 and the Native Americans on the Mississippi River program in New Orleans. Mr. Billiot passed away November 9, 1998.

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