

Billie "Sunday" Hester

BILLY "SUNDAY" HESTER

Born: May 11, 1915 – Lathemtown, GA

1925 – Got into the automobile business relining brakes on Model-T's ... at a dime per axle. Billie was ten years old.

1925 – Family moved back to their roots in Lathemtown, a small North Georgia community in Cherokee County. Billie, at age 13, wired the house for electricity by taking a three value/one cylinder T-Model engine attached to a pulley, wired to six 6-volt batteries and a string of 32 watt bulbs.

1935 – age 20 opened the very first Cherokee Garage, renting a building from racing Hall of Famer Jack Smith's grandfather, Lee Smith, in Lathemtown.

1941 – Opened the famed Cherokee Garage in Atlanta, where he stayed until 1980.

1949–1954 – Along with driver Gober Sosebee, built and cars that won a ton of modified events, including two NASCAR Daytona Beach wins. They also had two other NASCAR Grand National (Nextel Cup) wins, which included 17 top 5's, 33 top 10's in only 71 starts.

1952-55 – fielded cars for facing Hall of Famer Charlie Mincey, winning many feature events and track championships throughout the State of Georgia.

A couple of years before he died, Billie was laughing and said that a fellow named Carl Kiekhaefer came in with all those Chryslers. I remember telling him good luck today. He said I don't need luck. I got seven million dollars in the bank, and all you guys are going to be doing is running for second. "I was getting out anyway, but I figured this was a good time".

Billie died March 7, 2004, less than 24 hours before learning he had been elected to the Hall of Fame.