

Billy Ezell

by Dan Basore, Honorary Member Chairman

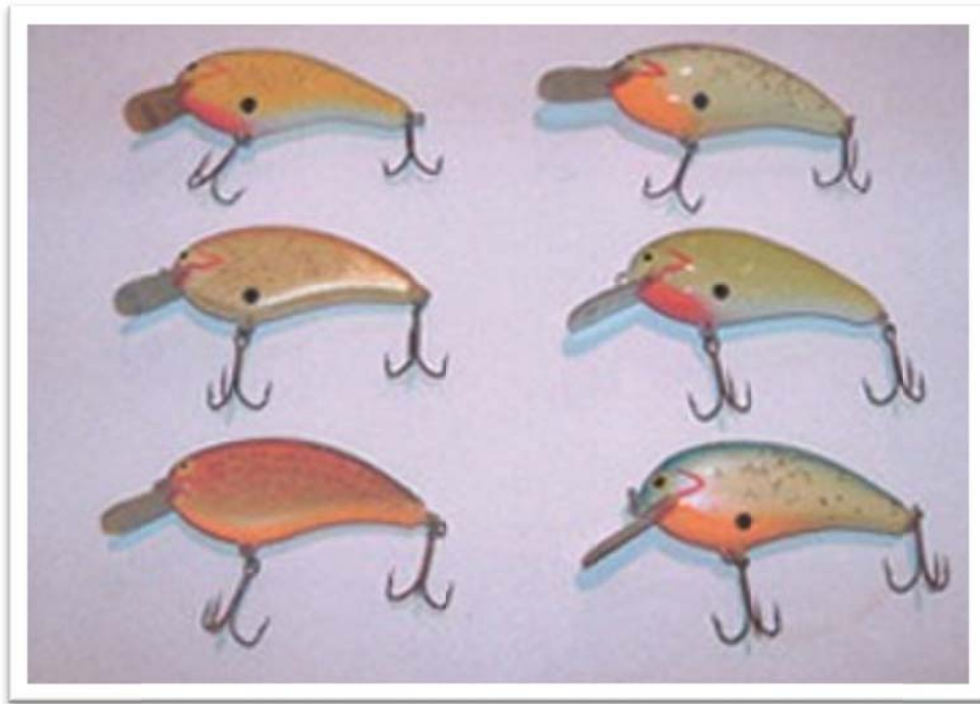


Billy Ezell
Spartanburg, South Carolina

NFLCC member Robert Clark, who wrote a reference book about South Carolina lures, nominated Billy Ezell from Spartanburg, South Carolina. He made balsa baits from 1972 until 1994 that were reported to be some of the bass circuit pros secret go-to baits.

In 1973 when he felt his lures were good enough to sell he showed them to a co-worker, Willie Willis, who asked Billy the name of his lures. Ezell replied "I'm naming them WILLIE after you." The name stuck.

He made three sizes of his alphabet lures: Big Willie Round, Middle Willie Round and Little Willie Round. He also made flat versions of his baits. The Little Willie lures are scarce as he made few of them since they didn't catch many fish. Other scarce baits are his early ones marked 1973 on their lips.



Willie lures by Billy Ezell

All his lures were made of balsa wood, signed on the bottom, BB EZELL. There are some proto-types and two cedar presentation boxes with 12 of his baits.

The escalating cost of hooks was the reason he stopped making lures in 1994. He just couldn't see charging more than \$5.00 for a fishing lure.

Billy estimates that he made around 15,000 lures and that paid for his house.

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