

Billy Lee

Titles: 38 Sources: 3 Stills: 2

Born: Billy Lee Schlenaker; Nelson, Indiana; September 12th 1929
[elsewhere given as 1930]

Died: Beaumont, California; November 17th 1989

No relation to either Carolyn Lee [\[qv\]](#), Davey Lee [\[qv\]](#) or Frankie Lee [\[qv\]](#)

Educated at the Meglin School for Kiddies *[sic]*, Los Angeles



BILLY LEE in PARAMOUNT PICTURES

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Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion entry:

"American child star of the thirties."

Those Endearing Young Charms entry:

"Dark brown hair and brown eyes. Billy Lee was a little Indiana farm boy who became an actor due to the efforts of Mrs Ethel Meglin. Billy's parents wanted to see their son enter a professional career, so they enrolled him in a professional school - the Meglin School for Kiddies in Los Angeles. There he learned the professional arts of dancing, singing and acting.

Mrs Meglin, the supervisor of the school and Billy's personal dancing instructor, felt that her pupil was capable of handling movie roles only a few months following his enrolment. Paramount was then casting for the lead roles in an up and coming Zane Grey Western entitled "**WAGON WHEELS**". When Mrs Meglin discovered that the studio sought a little boy to act in the film, she brought him posthaste. The screen test proved a fruitful one and Billy, at the age of four, became a full-fledged movie star."

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"When Billy Lee Schlenaker was only two his family moved to Los Angeles. The bright kid was enrolled at the Meglin School, and soon showed singing, dancing and acting talent. He began appearing semi-publicly in L.A. before he was four. Hal Roach saw him, and cast him in the Our Gang comedy "**MIKE FRIGHT**" - not as a gang member, but as a little smartypants tap-dancer. Almost at once Paramount signed him up for "**WAGON WHEELS**" and a healthy contract. Billy Lee's shining morning face and cheerful professionalism kept him busily employed till the onset of the teens and the realities of life. During "**COCOANUT GROVE**" he learned to play the drums, and later formed the Billy Lee Band. He also toured in vaudeville as a dancer."

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
19		DADDY LONG LEGS	
19		THE UNPARDONABLE SIN with <i>Bobby Connelly</i>	"George Washington Sticker"
20-22		RAGS TO RICHES	(first film for Warner Bros)
20-22		SCHOOL DAYS	
21		BOB HAMPTON OF PLACER	
22		PENROD with <i>Gordon Griffith, Clara Horton, Sunshine Sammy Morrison, Florence Morrison</i>	title role
23		THE COUNTRY KID with <i>"Spec" O'Donnell, Bruce Guerin</i>	
23		THE PRINTER'S DEVIL	
23		HEROES OF THE STREET with <i>Joe Butterworth</i>	
24		GEORGE WASHINGTON, Jr	

FILMOGRAPHY

- * 34 [d] (4) MIKE FRIGHT(with Our Gang)
- * 34 WAGON WHEELS
- * 35 (5) THE SILK HAT KID
- * 35 TWO FISTED
- * 36 (6) AND SUDDEN DEATH
- * 36 ARIZONA MAHONEY
- * 36 THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1937(with David Holt)
- * 36 EASY TO TAKE (with Douglas Scott, Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer)
- * 36 ROSE BOWL
- * 36 THE SKY PARADE(with Bennie Bartlett)
- * 36 THREE CHEERS FOR LOVE(with Darryl Hickman)
- * 36 TOO MANY PARENTS (with Sherwood Bailey, George Ernest, Silas "Buster Phelps,
- Gene Reynolds, Douglas Scott, Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer, Lee Van Atta)
- * 37 (7) EXCLUSIVE(with Bennie Bartlett)
- * 37 MAKE A WISH (with Bobby Breen, Tommy Bupp)
- * 37 THUNDER TRAIL (credited as "Bill Lee", with Gene Reynolds)
- * 37 WILD MONEY
- * 38 (8) COCOANUT GROVE
- * 38 SAY IT IN FRENCH
- * 38 SONS OF THE LEGION (with Wally Albright, Bennie Bartlett, George Billings, Billy Cook, David Holt, Donald O'Connor)
- * 39 (9) AMBUSH
- * 39 BOY TROUBLE (with Donald O'Connor, Wally Albright, George Billings, Sonny Bupp, Tommy Tucker)
- * 39 IN OLD MONTEREY (with Jonathan Lee - no relation)
- * 39 JEEPERS CREEPERS (as Skeeter)
- * 39 LET US LIVE(with Spellman)
- * 39 NIGHT WORK(with Donald O'Connor)
- * 39 SUDDEN MONEY(with Sonny Bupp)
- * 40 (10) THE BISCUIT EATER [aka "God Gave Him a Dog"] (with Cordell Hickman)
- * 40 NOBODY'S CHILDREN
- * 40 PAROLE FIXER(with Sonny Bupp)

- * 41 (11) HOLD BACK THE DAWN
- * 41 NEVADA CITY
- * 41 POWER DIVE
- * 41 REG'LAR FELLERS (in lead r"le, with Carl "Alfalfa□ Switzer, Dick Van Patten)
- * 41 THE RELUCTANT DRAGON
- * 42 (12) MRS WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH (with Carl "Alfalfa Switzer,
Mary Thomas, Carolyn Lee - no relation)
- * 42 THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS
- * 42 WAR DOGS
- * 43 (13) EYES OF THE UNDERWORLD (credited as "Bill Lee", with Sonny Bupp)

[Curiously, although none of these are silent films, barely half of them are listed in "Halliwell's Film Guide", and fewer still in "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide". So what happened to all these wartime titles? They can't all have been lost!]