



## Sara Christian

August 25, 1918-1980

Nationality: American

Raced: 1949-1950

**Origins:** Sara Williams Christian was born in Paulding County, Georgia in 1918. She married Frank Christian and the couple had two children, Patricia and Tommy. Frank was a businessman and a bootlegger. He became very involved in racing and used some of his profits from the moonshine business to purchase stock cars in the 1940s. Sara later came to race some of these cars and she made a name for herself by being one of the few women to compete during NASCAR's early years. She participated in seven races throughout 1949 and 1950 and had two top ten finishes.

**Early Influences:** Christian became involved in racing because of her husband. With his stock cars, Frank helped sponsor some of the best drivers in NASCAR during the 1940s and 1950s, including the Flock brothers and Curtiss Turner. It was his connection to these men and his own love of racing that contributed to Sara's interest in the sport. In 1948, when he, Charlie Mobley, and Bob Flock built New Atlanta Speedway in Morrow, Georgia, they invited Sara, her sister Mildred, and Ethel Flock Mobley to race there. They hoped the powder puff races would attract crowds. It was the first time Sara had ever raced. She won and was so excited by it that she wanted to continue competing. Frank supported her in her races the following two years. The couple even competed against each other at Daytona in 1949, becoming the only husband and wife in NASCAR history to do so. Frank finished the race in sixth place and Sara in eighteenth.

### Racing Accomplishments:

- Participated in six of NASCAR's eight events in 1949 and placed 13th in point standings for the year.

- Competed in NASCAR's first strictly stock race which took place at Charlotte Speedway in Charlotte, NC on June 19, 1949.
  - She finished 14th out of 33 drivers and was the only woman to participate, thereby becoming the first female to drive in a race promoted by NASCAR.
- Placed 18th at Daytona's Beach & Road Course, July 10, 1949.
  - She competed against her husband, Frank in this race, as well as Ethel Flock Mobley and Louise Smith.
- Placed 23rd at Occoneechee Speedway in Hillsboro, NC, August 7, 1949.
- Finished 6th in a field of 45 at Langhorne Speedway in Langhorne, PA, September 11, 1949.
  - She drove a '49 Oldsmobile and winner Curtis Turner invited her to accompany him in the victory lane because of her stellar performance.
- Placed 5th driving a '49 Ford at Heidelberg Raceway in Pittsburgh, PA, October 2, 1949.
- Placed 12th at North Wilkesboro Speedway in North Wilkesboro, NC, October 16, 1949.
- Finished 14th driving a '50 Ford at Hamburg Speedway in Hamburg, NY, August 27, 1950.
- Became one of few drivers to break the measured mile record at Daytona Beach, averaging over 100 mph, February 10, 1953.

**Interesting Fact:** Christian numbered her Ford 7/11 because it represented the ages of her children at the time she was racing.

**Life off the Track:** Outside of the world of motor sports, much of Sara Christian's time was spent raising her children. When she retired from racing in the early 1950s, the family moved to a town northwest of Atlanta. Sara and Frank spent their days farming and also operated the Cherokee Motel that was located in the area.

**Awards and Achievements:**

- Voted "Woman Driver of the Year" by the United States Drivers' Association in 1949.
- Inducted into the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame in 2004.