

Alger "Texas" Alexander □ – Texas Troublesome Blues (1927-1950) [2009]

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 18 July 2017 14:30 -

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A1 Range In My Kitchen Blues 2:58 A2 Mama, I Heard You Brought It Right Back Home 2:50 A3 Death Bed Blues 2:30 A4 Bantam Rooster Blues 3:11 A5 Deep Blue Sea Blues 3:09 A6 Mama's Bad Luck Child 3:14 A7 St. Louis Fair Blues 2:54 A8 Gold Tooth Blues 2:53 B1 Johnny Behren's Blues 3:00 B2 Texas Special 3:10 B3 Days Is Lonesome 3:31 B4 Last Stage Blues 3:03 B5 Texas Troublesome Blues 3:13 B6 One Morning Blues 2:35 B7 Deceitful Blues 2:50 B8 Bottoms Blues 2:46 Guitar – Carl Davis (tracks: B2, B6, B7), Eddie Lang (tracks: A7), Leon Benton (tracks: B8), Dennis "Little Hat" Jones (tracks: A8, B1), Lonnie Johnson (tracks: A1, A3 to A6), Sam Chatman (tracks: B3 to B5), Walter Vinson (tracks: B3 to B5), Willie Reed (tracks: B6, B7) Piano – Eddie Heywood (tracks: A2), Edwin "Buster" Pickens (tracks: B8) Violin – Bo Chatman (tracks: B3 to B5) Vocals – Alger Alexander
Remastered from rare original 78s at Sexton Studio.

Alger "Texas" Alexander (September 12, 1900 – April 18, 1954) was an American blues singer from Jewett, Texas. Some sources claim that he was the cousin of Lightnin' Hopkins, but no direct kinship has ever been established. It was also claimed that he was the uncle of Texas country blues guitarist Frankie Lee Sims.

A short man with a big, deep voice, Alexander started his career performing on the streets and at local parties and picnics in the Brazos River bottomlands, where he sometimes worked with Blind Lemon Jefferson. In 1927 he began a recording career that continued into the 1930s, recording sides for the Okeh and Vocalion record labels in New York, San Antonio, and Fort Worth.

Songs he recorded include "Mama's Bad Luck Child," "Sittin' on a Log," "Texas Special," "Broken Yo Yo" and "Don't You Wish Your Baby was Built Up Like Mine?"

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His early records for Okeh are notable not only for the personal originality of his songs, but for the musical motifs against which they are set. On April 9, 1934, Alexander recorded backed by the Mississippi Sheiks. Their line-up featured Bo Carter on violin, plus Sam Chatman and Walter Vinson on guitar. The eight tracks recorded included "Seen Better Days", and "Frost Texas Tornado Blues", the latter of which spoke of the tornado which destroyed Frost, Texas on May 6, 1930, leaving 41 dead.

Alexander did not play a musical instrument himself, and over the years he worked with a number of other artists including King Oliver, Eddie Lang, Lonnie Johnson, Little Hat Jones, the Mississippi Sheiks, and Lightnin' Hopkins. He sang in the free rhythm of work songs, such as the migrant cotton pickers he performed for might have sung, which posed a challenge for those accompanying him. Indeed, his singing is difficult to follow, and on his gramophone records his accompanists can often be heard resetting their watches to 'Alexander Time'. Lonnie Johnson devised free-form guitar melodies in counterpoint to his vocal lines.

In 1939, Alexander allegedly murdered his wife, resulting in a stay in the state penitentiary in Paris, Texas from 1940 to 1945. Research by writer Coy Prather in the Spring 2014 issue of Texas Music Magazine revealed that the often printed prison stay by Alexander may be a myth. There are no records of Alexander ever serving a sentence in a Texas prison, and there was never a prison in Paris, Texas. Prather believes Alexander may have served time on a county work farm for playing lewd music in public. After that he returned to performing and recording, and Alexander made his last recording in 1950 with Benton's Busy Bees (Leon Benton, guitar and Buster Pickens, piano), before dying at the age of 53 of syphilis in 1954. --- worldlibrary.org

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