

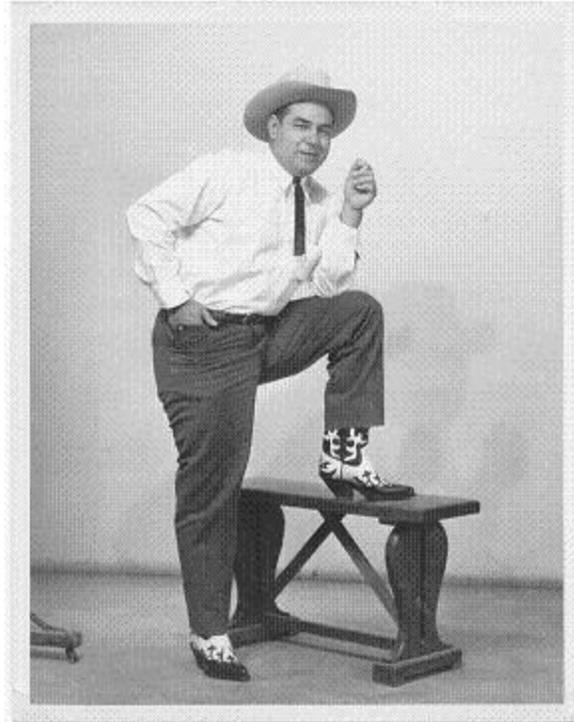
Jimmie Revard and His Oklahoma Playboys

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Playboys: This western swing band, founded around 1935 in the San Antonio area by Oklahoma-born Jimmie Revard, was one of the best-known western swing bands in the Southwest prior to World War II. Arriving on the scene just as the genre was beginning to gain national popularity, the Oklahoma Playboys became one of the most popular western swing outfits in South Central Texas, alongside local favorites the Tune Wranglers. At times, in fact, both bands shared several members.

The Oklahoma Playboys' original lineup included Jimmie Revard (bass and guitar), Adolph Hofner (guitar and steel), Emil Hofner (guitar and steel), Ben McKay (fiddle), Curley Williams (guitar), and Eddie Whitley (piano and vocals.) Revard (born November 26, 1909, in Pawhuska, Oklahoma), Curley Williams, and Adolph Hofner took turns on vocals when Eddie Whitley left after the first few sessions. In 1936, the group signed a contract with Bluebird Records, becoming one of the label's best-selling country acts from 1936 to 1938. In 1938, the addition of clarinet (Jimmie Revard) and drums (Edmond Franke) helped solidify the band's standing as "one of the most sophisticated country dance bands of the era."

Over the years, critics have noted that, although the group's fame was largely limited to the Lone Star State, its blues and jazz inflected string-band sound make the Oklahoma Playboys a remarkable example of the eclectic blending of musical genres found throughout the Southwest. Norm Cohen, for example, refers to Jimmie Revard and His Oklahoma Playboys as one of the area's "first rate groups that...demonstrate Western Swing's various debts to blues, jazz, big band swing and old time fiddle music." Although the Oklahoma Playboys' career was short, peaking during the mid to late-1930s, the music the band left behind is substantial and has assured the group its place in western swing history.



Carol Neel