

# Prince Albert Hunt

**Hunt, Prince Albert.** Fiddle player, singer; b. Archie Albert Hunt in Terrell, Texas, December 20, 1896; d. Dallas, March 21, 1931; son of Archibald Hunt and Manasa Emma Lee Skates. In the late 1920s, Hunt and his Texas Ramblers recorded several sides for the Okeh label, and, in addition to the East Texas Serenaders, Hunt was one of the few musicians playing “old-time country numbers with melodic variations that presaged western swing.” Hunt also performed with fellow musicians Oscar Harper and his nephew Doc, the latter of which developed a notable reputation in East Texas and was later recorded by John A. Lomax in 1942 for the Library of Congress.



Hunt also recorded with a more obscure guitarist and a violinist by the name of Harmon Clem on his two known recording sessions, one of which occurred March 28, 1928, in San Antonio and the other in late June 1929, in Dallas. Hunt’s complete discography includes the songs “Canada Waltz,” “Houston Slide,” “Oklahoma Rag,” “Traveling Man,” “Katy on Time,” “Waltz of the Rose,” and “Blues in the Bottle,” but he is perhaps best remembered for his song “Wake Up Jacob,” which is included on the renowned Anthology of American Folk Music CD.

Hunt made numerous lasting contributions to the early development of western swing in Texas and to country music in general. In addition to his work as a recording artist, he also frequently performed over local radio stations and at local dance halls in the Dallas area. Hunt and a number of his musician friends frequented the Dallas neighborhood known as Deep Ellum and Central Track, which included a notorious red-light district that was home to many theaters, cheap hotels, saloons, dance halls, and pawnshops. In fact, some of the best blues and country artists spent time in Deep Ellum in the 1920s and 1930s listening to and jamming with other musicians. It was in Dallas on March 21, 1931, at 11:45 p.m. that Prince Albert Hunt was shot and fatally wounded outside of the Confederate Hall at 421 North Harwood Street. *The Dallas Morning News* reported that his assailant, William M. Douglas, was a former city fireman and the husband of a woman that Hunt had accompanied to a dance. Douglas later told police that “he [Hunt] broke up my home...He took my wife clear away from me. He had her at the dance with him and I followed them downstairs,” in front of the hall where, from close-range, he shot Hunt in the chest under the left arm with a .25 caliber automatic pistol. Hunt was then rushed to Parkland Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. He left behind his wife, Mary Cook, their four children, and his parents.

*Shaun Stalzer*