

Alger 'Texas' Alexander

Alger 'Texas' Alexander is known as one of the most important blues singers of the 1920s to the mid 1950s. His 1928 recording, "Rising Sun," went on to become the oft-recorded classic song "House of the Rising Sun."

Alexander began his musical career by playing parties and picnics, often with his cousin, blues legend Lightnin' Hopkins, and with the equally influential Blind Lemon Jefferson. He made his first recordings in 1927 for the Okeh label. Unlike Hopkins and Jefferson, Alexander was purely a vocal stylist, a singer, not an instrumentalist. He collaborated with some of the finest jazz and blues players of the era, capturing on disc, among others; Little Hat Jones, Lonnie Johnson, Clarence Williams and Eddie Lang, and bands such as the Mississippi Sheiks and King Oliver's New Orleans band.

After a brief break from the recording studio, Alexander returned in 1934, with sessions for Vocalion. Feeling the effects of the Depression, he often resorted to working as a street musician or outside of music altogether, often accompanied by Hopkins, and eventually collaborating with Lowell Fulson and Howlin' Wolf in the late 1930s.

In 1939, he killed his wife, and was sentenced to five years in the state penitentiary in Paris, Texas. Upon his release in 1945, he moved to Houston, reconnecting with Hopkins and recording for the Aladdin and Freedom labels. Texas Alexander made his last recording in 1950 with Benton's Busy Bees. He succumbed to syphilis in 1954.

