These were the words that listeners to the regular blues programs relayed from station KFJZ out of Ft. Worth in the late 30s would hear as the program was introduced. At that time the name of the Black Ace was a familiar one in the homes of both Negroes and white persons living in the city and in the surrounding country. "They started to call me the Black Ace when I put out the Black Ace Blues in 1937" the singer recalled when we recorded him some 25 years later, in the summer of 1960. "I was broadcasting for KFJZ. I played the blues for them and they gave me a lot of money for entertainment. But his brother had an improvised guitar made from "a guitar neck which had some wires on" and his wife plucking cotton bolls in the cotton patch. "We went out and bought a new set of tires and they took the car away from me, tires and all. Finance Company took it, I believe they called it 'Security' ... well, it must have been security'. The car was worth $1,200!" Out of work he tracked the streets looking for a job and applied regularly at the Employment Office. "Then the man sent me to this Don Juarez studio to work there a day, two days out of every week. And the man liked my work and he gave me a regular job. So been working there ever since."

Returning from the services Ace was faced with the problem of securing new work. He tried numerous jobs - "What kind of work?" he exclaimed, "Man, I done everything!" He was married, had a son and times were tough. 1949 found him and his wife picking cotton bolls in the fields and he went out to try to pick some cotton, me and my wife, I think we could pick oh, about 300 lbs. - well, that kept us eating."

When the cotton-picking season was over Ace secured a job as a janitor at the Ft. Worth Airport which he held for more than 5 years until he was "laid off" in 1955. That year he found himself picking cotton again and the future seemed bleak as ever. "We didn't pick enough cotton to keep my car - you know somethin' - they took my car away from me. I'd bought me new set of tires and they took the car away from me, tires and all. Finance Company took it, I believe they called it 'Security' ... well, it must have been security'. The car was worth $1,200!" Out of work he tracked the streets looking for a job and applied regularly at the Employment Office. "Then the man sent me to this Don Juarez studio to work there a day, two days out of every week. And the man liked my work and he gave me a regular job. So been working there ever since."

Of the few exponents of the flat Hawaiian guitar blues style who have been recorded, Oscar Woods is dead, and Kokomo Arnold - whom Black Ace resembles - has long since retired with no desire to play or sing again. These recordings of a great blues singer have the added importance that they may be the last to be made of a style of blues which has all but vanished.

Paul Oliver - 1961