

Sister Rosetta Tharpe

(Gospel Singers)

Scott #3219

Issued on July 15, 1998 in New Orleans, LA

Designed by Howard Paine



Rosetta Nubin was born in Cotton Plant, Arkansas in 1915. One of America's most popular gospel singers, Sister Rosetta is remembered for her powerful voice, natural flamboyance and pioneering spirit.

Rosetta began her singing career performing throughout the South and Midwest with her mother, a traveling evangelist. They eventually settled in Chicago during the late 1920s, where Rosetta had made her original debut singing and playing guitar at the age of six. Not long afterwards they began touring with P.W. McGhee's tent revivals.

Rosetta moved to New York City in the mid thirties and in 1938 she recorded the hit songs, Rock Me, That's All, and This Train for Decca Records. She began billing herself as Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Rosetta performed with Lucky Millinder and Benny Goodman during the late thirties and early forties.

In 1946 Rosetta made several recordings with Marie Knight and they toured together with several quartets. When Rosetta and Marie began recording blues during the early fifties, many of their fans felt betrayed. Rosetta returned to her gospel singing, but Marie continued to sing the blues.

Because of the furor and the controversy over Rosetta's blues singing period, she never again regained the popularity and success she had enjoyed earlier. She did enjoy some success when she toured Europe with Muddy Waters in the sixties, but was soon relegated to playing in small churches throughout the country.

Rosetta suffered a stroke in 1970 and lost the use of her legs. She continued to sing, however and toured with the Nightingales in 1972.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe died on October 9, 1973 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Sources:

Encyclopedia Africana

Atlanta Music Group (AMG)