Cox, Ida (1896-1967) Encyclopedia Article

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Billed as the "Uncrowned Queen of the Blues," Ida Cox (born Ida Prather) never achieved the fame of her contemporaries Bessie Smith and Gertrude "Ma" Rainey. Though she spent most of the 1920s and 1930s touring the United States with various minstrel troupes, including her own "Raisin' Cain Revue," she also found time to record seventy-eight sides for Paramount Records between 1923 and 1929. Among these was her best known song, "Wild Women Don't Have the Blues," which was identified by Angela Y. Davis as "the most famous portrait of the nonconforming, independent woman."

Noted record producer John Hammond revitalized Cox's career by highlighting her in the legendary "Spirituals to Swing" concert at Carnegie Hall in 1939. Cox continued her recording career until she suffered a stroke in 1944. Six years after a 1961 comeback attempt that produced the album *Blues for Rampart Street,* Ida Cox died of cancer.

Further Reading:

Davis, Angela Y. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.* New York, Pantheon, 1998.

Harrison, Daphne Duval. *Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920s.* New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1988.