

# THE RECORDINGS OF MARTHA COPELAND

## An Annotated Tentative Personnelo - Discography

COPELAND, Martha

“That so little of a blues singer who recorded as extensively as Martha Copeland seems incredible. While she is not considered to be one of the key classic blues performers of the 1920s, she nonetheless left an impressive group of recordings. Yet, almost nothing is known of her.”

(John Wilby, booklet of Document DOCD-5372)

### MARTHA COPELAND

001 **MARTHA COPELAND** New York, c. Sep. 15, 1923  
Martha Copeland – voc;  
**Eddie Heywood** – pno  
71837-D The Down So Long Blues OK 8112, Document DOCD-5372  
71838-B The Pawn Shop Blues OK 8112, Document DOCD-5372

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Comment unnecessary.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Eddie Heywood, pno.
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Eddie Heywood -p.
- L. Wright, Okeh Race Records, 8000 Series: Eddie Heywood, pno.

002 **MARTHA COPELAND** New York, c. Sep. 18, 1923  
Martha Copeland – voc;  
**Eddie Heywood** – pno  
71844-C Daddy, You’ve Done Put That Thing On Me OK 8091, Document DOCD-5372  
71845-B The Penetrating Blues OK 8091, Document DOCD-5372

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Comment unnecessary.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Eddie Heywood, pno.
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Eddie Heywood -p.
- L. Wright, Okeh Race Records, 8000 Series: Eddie Heywood, pno.

003 **MARTHA COPELAND** New York, Sep. 14, 1926  
Martha Copeland – voc;  
**Cliff Jackson** – pno  
142608-1 Black Snake Blues Col 14161-D, Document DOCD-5372  
142609-2 Papa, If You Can’t Do Better Col 14161-D, Document DOCD-5372  
142609-3 Papa, If You Can’t Do Better Col 14161-D, Document DOCD-5372

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Comment unnecessary. Great Cliff Jackson. What more can we long for?

Notes:

- RR 77-8: not listed.
- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Cliff Jackson, pno.
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Cliff Jackson -p.

Discernible differences of takes:

- 142609-2: 4-bar vamp after 4-bar intro: pno plays 3 bars in medium range, 4<sup>th</sup> bar one octave higher up
- 142609-3: 4-bar vamp after 4-bar intro: pno plays two equally formed 2-bar phrases in same medium range

004 **MARTHA COPELAND** New York, Dec. 21, 1926  
Martha Copeland – voc;  
**Bubber Miley** – tpt; **Cliff Jackson** – pno  
143203-1 On Decoration Day (They’ll Know Where To Bring Your Flowers To) Col 14189-D, Document DOCD-5372

143204-4

Fortune Teller Blues

Col 14189-D,

Document DOCD-5372

Once again, a record not to think much about as the personnel is documented on the record label. But, unfortunately, we have to state Bubber Miley's decline here (see also session 147 of my Choo Choo Jazzers list). Again, we hear the beautiful piano playing of Cliff Jackson.

Notes:

- RR 77-8: not listed.

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Bubber Miley, cnt; Cliff Jackson, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4: Seymour Irick -t; Cliff Jackson -p.

- Rust\*6: Bubber Miley, c; Cliff Jackson, p.

- VJM 177, Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers: "... Copeland addresses "Bubber". These references are valuable as these sessions, i.e. this, and the McCoys preceding and following have an unusually subdued Bubber Miley. Earlier references named Seymour Irick (tp) possibly because of this fact."

**005 MARTHA COPELAND**

Camden, NJ,

Feb. 03, 1927

Martha Copeland – voc; Sidney Easton – voc (1,2);

Bert Howell – vln (1,2,3); Phil Worde – pno

37393-2 When The Wind Makes Connection With Your Dry Goods

Vic 20548,

Document DOCD-5372

37394-2 Hard Hearted Mama

Vic 20548,

Document DOCD-5372

37395-2 I Don't Care Who Ain't Got Nobody

Vic 20769,

Document DOCD-5372

37396-1 Stole My Man Blues

Vic 20769,

Document DOCD-5372

Here, we find Phil Worde's retained but fundamental and rather simple piano accompaniment. He obviously had strong connections to the blues scene, rather than to the jazz musicians.

Notes:

- B. Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc. by Bert Howell -vn; Phil Worde -p; with Sidney Easton -v.

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Phil Worde, pno; Bert Howell, vln (1,2,3); Sidney Easton, vcl (1,2).

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Phil Worde -p; with Bert Howell -vn (3); Sidney Easton -v (1,2).

**006 MARTHA COPELAND**

New York,

Feb. 16, 1927

Martha Copeland – voc;

**Louis Hooper** – pno

143480-2 The Black Snake Moan

Col 14196-D,

Document DOCD-5372

143481-3 Mine's Just As Good As Yours

Col 14196-D,

Document DOCD-5372

How easy again to have to find the accompanist and find him printed on the record label. But into what a beautiful piano accompanist Louis Hooper has grown from 1923.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Louis Hooper, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Louis Hooper -p.

**007 MARTHA COPELAND**

New York,

Mar. 19, 1927

Martha Copeland – voc;

**Louis Metcalf** – tpt; **Louis Hooper** – pno

143689-1 Soul And Body

Col 14208-D,

Document DOCD-5372

143690-3 Sorrow Valley Blues

Col 14208-D,

Document DOCD-5372

And again, a printed documented accompaniment. Both players are easy to identify and their individual playing styles may serve to find out other "unknowns". Metcalf is trying out whole-tone phrases here.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Louis Metcalf, cnt; Louis Hooper, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Louis Metcalf -c; Louis Hooper -p.

**008 MARTHA COPELAND**

New York,

May 05, 1927

Martha Copeland – voc;

**Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller** – clt;

**Porter Grainger** – pno

144097-3 Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues

Col 14227-D,

Document DOCD-5372

144098-3 Mr. Brakes-Man (Let Me Ride Your Train)

Col 14227-D,

Document DOCD-5372

As the three participants are documented on the record label it only leaves to see/hear what they play.

On 'Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues' the whole accompaniment is arranged throughout, Bob Fuller playing first part and Elliott second.

'Mr. Bakes-Man' again has Fuller playing first part clarinet, Elliott staying in the lower register. It has to be added that nothing typical for Elliott can be heard as he stays very much in the background.

Notes:

- BGR \*2,\*3: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller, clt; Porter Grainger, pno

- BGR \*4: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller, clt; Porter Grainger, pno; unknown whistle/train-effects

- Rust \*3,\*4: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller – clt; Porter Grainger – pno

- Rust \*6: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller – clt; Porter Grainger – pno; unknown - whistle, train effects

**009 MARTHA COPELAND**

New York,

Jul. 22, 1927

Martha Copeland – voc;

**Porter Grainger** – pno

144490-3	Police Blues	Col 14237-D,	Document DOCD-5372
144491-2	Skeleton Key Blues	Col 14237-D,	Document DOCD-5372

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Comment unnecessary.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Porter Grainger, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Porter Grainger -p.

010 <b>MARTHA COPELAND</b>		New York,	Aug. 09, 1927
Martha Copeland – voc;			
<b>Porter Grainger</b> – pno; <b>Buddy Christian</b> – bjo, voc train effects			
144538-2	Hobo Bill	Col 14248-D,	Document DOCD-5372
144539-3	Nobody Rocks Me Like My Baby Do	Col 14248-D,	Document DOCD-5372

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Comment unnecessary. Buddy Christian seems to be the train effect vocalist as his “hisses” are synchronic with his banjo strokes.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Porter Grainger, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Porter Grainger -p; Buddy Christian -bj .

011 <b>MARTHA COPELAND</b>		New York,	Oct. 13, 1927
Martha Copeland – voc;			
<b>Bob Fuller</b> – clt; <b>Porter Grainger</b> – pno			
144852-2	Shootin’ Star Blues	Col 14262-D,	Document DOCD-5373
144853-3	Good Time Mama Blues	Col 14262-D,	Document DOCD-5373

Fuller and Grainger as documented in the Columbia files. Fuller performs in his antiquated very fast vibrato, with little feeling for the blues.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Bob Fuller –as; Porter Grainger -p

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Bob Fuller, alt; Porter Grainger, pno

012 <b>MARTHA COPELAND</b>	her Smokey City Trio	New York,	Dec. 06, 1927
Martha Copeland – voc;			
<b>Andrew Mead</b> – alt; <b>Ralph Jones</b> – vln;			
<b>Porter Grainger</b> – pno			
145275-2	Wylie Avenue Blues	Col 14310-D,	Document DOCD-5373
145276-2	Everybody Does It Now	Col 14310-D,	Document DOCD-5373

This is the only appearance of altoist Andrew Mead on record. He performs in a legitimate way and may come from a stage band or similar aggregation. The more so, as he appears in the company of Ralph “Shrimp” Jones, violinist of early ‘Clef Club’ and ‘Ciro’s Club Coon’ days and former leader of the ‘Plantation Orchestra’.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Andrew Meade, alt; Ralph Jones, vln; Porter Grainger, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Louis Metcalf, c; Louis Hooper, p.

013 <b>MARTHA COPELAND</b>		New York,	Jan. 06, 1928
Martha Copeland – voc;			
<b>Porter Grainger</b> – pno			
145478-1	Bank Failure Blues	Col 14281-D,	Document DOCD-5373
145479-2	Second-Hand Daddy	Col 14281-D,	Document DOCD-5373

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Typical effective but humble stride piano accompaniment by Porter Grainger.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Porter Grainger, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Porter Grainger -p.

014 <b>MARTHA COPELAND</b>		New York,	May 26, 1928
Martha Copeland – voc;			
<b>Irving Peskin</b> - tpt; <b>Rube Bloom</b> – pno			
146348-3	I Can’t Give You Anything But Love	Col 14327-D,	Document DOCD-5373
146349-2	My Daddy Don’t Do Nothin’ Bad	Col 14327-D,	Document DOCD-5373

Miss Copeland is more on the popular side here and sings convincingly. Trumpeter Peskin playing is adequate and agreeable, but Rube Bloom plays great, swinging and commanding the whole performance from his stool.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Irving Peskin, cnt; Rube Bloom, pno.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Irving Peskin -c; Rube Bloom -p.

015 <b>MARTHA COPELAND</b>		New York,	Jun. 08, 1928
Martha Copeland – voc;			
<b>Clarence Adams</b> - clt; <b>James P. Johnson</b> – pno			

146417-1                      Somethin' Goin' On Wrong                      Col 14352-D,      Document DOCD-5373

Clarence Adams is a clarinet player who also appears on Clara Smith's sessions of May 01 and 03, 1926, and may belong to the vast deposit of vaudeville and tent show musicians who never reached the limelight of the big cities. He plays in a very effective bluesy style, unexpectedly secure in his technical abilities, yet with great beauty.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Clarence Adams, clt; James P. Johnson, pno.
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Clarence Adams -cl; James P. Johnson -p.

016 **MARTHA COPELAND**                      New York,                      Jun. 09, 1928  
 Martha Copeland – voc;  
**Clarence Adams** - clt; **James P. Johnson** – pno, speech  
 146420-3                      Desert Blues                      Col 14352-D,      Document DOCD-5373

Same as for previous session. Clarence Adams showing great technical abilities in a modest way. Certainly an unsung master of blues/jazz clarinet, unfortunately a bit standing in James P. Johnson's shadow.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Clarence Adams, clt; James P. Johnson, pno, talking.
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Clarence Adams -cl; James P. Johnson -p.

017 **MARTHA COPELAND**                      New York,                      Aug. 28, 1928  
 Martha Copeland – voc;  
**Bubber Miley** – tpt; **J. C. Johnson** – pno  
 146923-2                      Mama's Well Has Done Gone Dry                      Col 14377-D,      Document DOCD-5373  
 146923-3                      Mama's Well Has Done Gone Dry                      Col 14377-D                      not on LP/CD  
 146924-3                      I Ain't Your, Mr. Fly Rooster                      Col 14377-D,      Document DOCD-5373

This certainly is not the typical exuberant growl and staccato man Miley on trumpet. But the Columbia files state Bubber Miley's presence on these sides and thus reject the Scherman/Eriksson discography's doubts as to Miley's presence. J.C. Johnson always is a very interesting pianist, coming from Chicago, but being an integral part of the Harlem pianist scene, with great pianistic technique and composing abilities. A special LP/CD of him had long been thought of by John R.T. Davies, but never realized, unfortunately.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Columbia files: acc. Bubber Miley, cnt; J.C. Johnson, p.
- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Bubber Miley, cnt; J. C. Johnson, pno
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Bubber Miley -c; J.C. Johnson -p.
- Scherman/Eriksson, Bubber Miley Disco: poss Bubber Miley (tp); J.C. Johnson (p). "Miley has been listed on trumpet without reservations in all previous discographies we have seen. In comparison with Miley's playing in Ellington's orchestra during this period, the trumpet man on this session sounds rather anonymous and substandard. We can hear a few Miley's trademarks, but other trumpet players had adopted them, and there is not enough aural evidence to establish his presence definitely."