

Speckled Red – Complete Recorded Works 1929-1938 (1993)

Written by bluesever

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SPECKLED RED Vocal acc by own (p) or piano solo. Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tenn., September 22, 1929. 01. *M 184 House Dance Blues* 02. *M 187-C The Dirty Dozen (No. 1)* 03. *M 188-D Wilkins Street Stomp - p* SPECKLED RED Vocal acc by own (p). Chicago, April 8, 1930. 04. *C 5584?-C The Dirty Dozen - No. 2* 05. *C 5585? We Got To Get That Fixed* 06. *C 5588 Speckled Red's Blues* 07. *C 5590 The Right String - But The Wrong Yo Yo* 08. *C 5591 Lonesome Mind Blues*

SPECKLED RED Speckled Red (p, vo), Robert Lee McCoy (g), Willie Hatcher (md), Sonny Boy Williamson (h-1). Aurora, Illinois, December 17, 1938. 09. *030838-1 Welfare Blues* 10. *030839-1 Down On The Levee* 11. *030840-1 Do The Georgia* 12. *030841-1 Early In The Morning* 13. *030842-1 Take It Easy* 14. *030843-1 Try Me One More Time* 15. *030844-1 Louise Baltimore Blues* 16. *030845-1 What Makes You Treat Me Mean ?* 17. *030846-1 St. Louis Stomp* 18. *030847-1 You Got To Fix It -1*

WILLIE HATCHER Speckled Red (p), Robert Lee McCoy (g), Willie Hatcher (md, vo). Aurora, Illinois, December 18, 1938. 19. *030866-1 They're Mean To Me* 20. *030867-1 So Unkind*

Bonus Tracks SPECKLED RED Vocal acc by own (p). St. Louis, Mo., September 2, 1956. 21. *19 Dad's Piece* 22. *21 Oh Red* 23. *22 Early In The Morning*

Speckled Red is a name that appears in blues and boogie-woogie piano collections alongside Cow Cow Davenport, Roosevelt Sykes, Romeo Nelson, Will Ezell, Montana Taylor, and Clarence "Pinetop" Smith. In 1994, all of his early recordings were compiled onto one compact disc by Document, a noble gesture that made these historic performances readily available worldwide for the first time. Rufus Perryman was born in Monroe, LA in 1892, the son of a blacksmith and ultimately one of 16 children. Albinism, the source of Rufus' professional nickname, ran in the family to some degree, for his little brother William (19 years his junior) was similarly complected and eventually became world famous as Piano Red. Rufus grew up in Hampton, GA, played church organ as a boy, fell under the influence of a Floridian pianist named Seminole, and then spent a lot of time in Detroit and Memphis, gigging at cat houses,

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clubs, and parties. He joined the Red Rose Minstrels in 1928, and while touring with that troupe, met Hudson Whittaker (Tampa Red) and Jim Jackson. Speckled Red's recording debut was as a sideman on "Jim Jackson's Jambouree"; he cut his first records under his own name at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis in September of 1929. Red's most famous recording, "The Dirty Dozen" derived from a traditional African-American insult ritual (still alive and well decades later and immortalized in Eminem's movie Eight Mile); one theory states that it was originally a send-up of a religious catechism. Naturally, Red's recorded version was much less abrasive and obscene than what was usually heard in person. This very successful record spawned a sequel at his second recording session, which took place in Chicago in April 1930. He wouldn't record again until December of 1938 when he cut 12 titles for Bluebird in Aurora Illinois with guitarist Robert Lee McCoy and mandolinist Willie Hatcher. If, as the discographies say, Sonny Boy Williamson was present on "You Got to Fix It," he was doing something other than blowing into the mouth organ. Unable to earn a stable livelihood as a recording musician, Rufus worked for years as a shipping clerk. This excellent compilation closes with three unaccompanied solos he recorded for the small-time Tone record company in St. Louis in September 1956. By then he was enjoying a comeback that would take him to California, London, and Copenhagen. Document's survey of these early recordings may serve as the ideal prologue to his final albums which were largely produced in Europe. Rufus "Speckled Red" Perryman succumbed to cancer in November 1973. His body was laid to rest in St. Louis. ---arwulf arwulf, Rovi

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