

## **BESSIE SMITH SAYS SHE WILL RETIRE IN 1960 \*\*\*\*\***

*One of the most unusual phenomena in Jazz history is the veil of obscurity that covers the life of the Empress of the Blues, Bessie Smith. Record Research will herewith introduce some original information on Bessie. Back in 1936 Bessie granted one of her rare press interviews.*

*This will be the first of several articles about the great Bessie.*

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New York City

"It's a long way from Tennessee to Broadway, but Bessie Smith made it even though it did take an extra year or so. The highway leading to the glamorous white lights of the gay white way is filled with many disappointments, but the portly delineator o, blue notes never allowed such trivial as hard knocks and disillusion to thwart an inner born desire to reach the top. Miss Smith is right now in her seventh week of an extended engagement at Connie's Inn and backed by Broadway's approval she has taken on new life. 'I'm feeling better now than ever in my life.' Miss Smith confided in an interview, 'And I feel as though I am on the brink of new successes. I am most certainly optimistic concerning the upward trend of the theatre.' 'Things have changed quite a bit' reminisced the Jubilant chantress, 'And I realize that we are living in an entirely new era of entertainment - far different from the one in which I began many years ago.

It was here that the stylist of blues songs blushed (actresses never like to appear old), but that was because she started her career as a child and has been active in the theatre for 27 years.

Bessie Smith was born in Chattanooga Tenn., April 15, 1898. She began her early career by appearing in school plays and made her first professional stage appearance at the age of 9 at the old Ivory Theatre in her home town. One of the interesting sidelights of her early life is that she spent her first weekly salary of \$8.00 to purchase a new pair of roller skates. Her mother couldn't see the logic of that and gave little Bessie a severe tanning. However, this did not dull that childish enthusiasm as she went ahead and won the roller Skating championship of the state.

Developing into one of the greatest blues singers of the day, Miss Smith has appeared in leading theatres throughout the country with other troupes as well as some of her own which she promoted in the days of the old Theatre Owners Booking Association while her recordings made for the Columbia Recording Company are played the world over.

Other than her theatrical inclinations she's fond of diamonds ~ fur coats, plays the guitar & piano attends sporting events for recreation. The Tennessee blues singer credits Cora Fisher and William C. Handy with furnishing her initial inspiration. A few years ago she starred in Handy's 'St. Louis Blues' when it was made into a motion picture short. Ethel Waters, also an outstanding blues singer, is Bessie's favorite. Bessie is a lover of pets and says she will retire in 1960, maybe (accent on the maybe) and settle down in the country.

The portly chantress of blue-note who is causing the stay-up-lates who frequent Connie's Inn on the gay White Way of NYC to thoroughly enjoy her rhythmic interpretation of songs, has been held over at the Broadway hot spot for an extended engagement After she finished her present contract at Connie's she will embark on a long tour of Deluxe theatres for Paramount, Loew & RKO.

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