

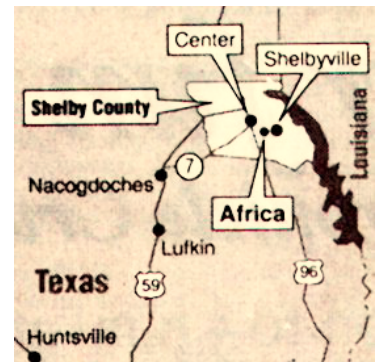


Texas Black History and Culture Highlights

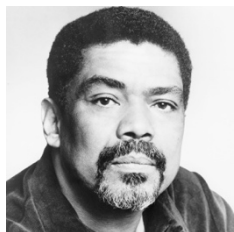
January 2023

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January of 1899 The freedmen's settlement of Africa, Texas was a thriving agricultural community. Built by former slaves, Africa consisted of a two-story town hall, a gristmill, a syrup mill, and three stores. Also known as Webb, Africa is located in East Texas, three miles southwest of Center and three hours away from Louisiana's entrance. While its history is largely unwritten, it has been estimated that the town's maximum population was 70, with a church ledger's oldest record dating back to 1894. According to the Texas State Historical Association, Africa's schoolhouse served forty-seven students in 1899, twenty children in 1903, and seventy-six in 1938. More about Africa, Texas can be read [here](#) and [here](#).



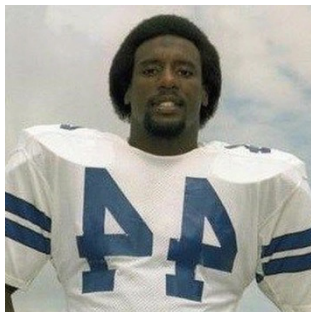
January 1, 1929 The very first HBCU football match, The Prairie View Bowl, occurred in Houston's West End Park. This first game was played in the city's Fourth Ward also known today as "Freedman's Town." With the exception of four games, this bowl was played annually on New Year's Day, until its finale in 1961. From 1929 through 1952, games were held at Buffalo Stadium, which was primarily a minor league baseball park. In 1953 the game moved to Public School Stadium (what is now known as Robertson Stadium) where it remained until this event ended. More about the Prairie View Bowl can be read [here](#) and [here](#).



January 5, 1931 The internationally acclaimed choreographer, Alvin Ailey was born in Rogers, Texas. In 1954 Ailey made his Broadway debut in a musical adaptation of Truman Capote's *House of Flowers*. Upon receiving critical acclaim for his masterwork, *Blues Suite* in 1958,

Ailey launched the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT). Ailey's most iconic work, *Revelations* debuted in New York in 1960, drawing inspiration from his Texas childhood memories of the Black church. In 1970, the AAADT became the first American dance company to tour the USSR in 50 years. The troupe received a 20-minute ovation for their performance in Leningrad. More about Alvin Ailey can be read [here](#). An excerpt of *Blues Suite* can be viewed [here](#).





January 9, 1950 The Dallas Cowboys running back, Robert Newhouse was born in Longview, Texas. He starred at Galilee High School in Hallsville, Texas and graduated accepting the University of Houston's recruiting offer to become a star Cougar. From 1969-1971, Newhouse set several rushing records exiting college as an all-time, single season, rushing leader with 1,757 yards during his senior year. He was a second round draft pick by the Cowboys in 1972. Newhouse led the team in rushing with 930 yards in 1975 and played all of his twelve NFL seasons with Dallas. More about Robert Newhouse can be read [here](#).

January 12, 1920 Civil rights leader James Leonard Farmer, Jr. was born in Marshall, Texas. The child of a college professor, James graduated high school and entered Wiley College at age fourteen. There, Farmer became a member of the 1935 award winning debate team. His debate team is the subject of the 2007 film, *The Great Debaters*. Farmer's non-violent activist logic developed while studying theology and Mahatma Gandhi at Howard University. In 1941 his religious aspirations shifted to confronting Jim Crow segregation in the Methodist church, thus compelling Farmer to establish the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942. More about James Farmer, Jr can be read [here](#).



January 16, 1950 Debbie Kaye Allen was born in Houston, Texas. A product of Third Ward's Jack Yates High School, Debbie Allen is an award winning actress, dancer, choreographer, director, singer and songwriter. From 1982-87 she starred in the musical-drama TV series *Fame* and also worked as the show's principal choreographer. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Golden Globe, Tony and multiple Emmy Awards. In 1991 she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. She is the founder of the Debbie Allen Dance Academy in Los Angeles and in 2001 was appointed to the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities by President George W. Bush. More about Debbie Allen can be read [here](#).

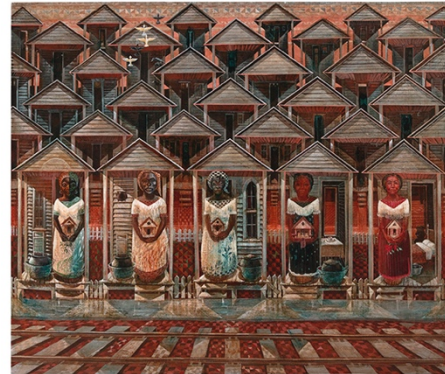
January 17, 1881 Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute opened in Austin, Texas. The school was chartered by the American Missionary Society of Congregational Churches and George Jeffrey Tillotson, a minister from Connecticut. Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute has had twelve presidents. J. T. Hodges was the first African American president (1924-29). Tillotson College temporarily ceased being coeducational to strictly serve women from 1926-1935. Samuel Huston College also evolved in Austin from the 1876 Methodist Episcopal conference and Freedman's Aid Society. The two institutions merged in 1952 to form what today is Huston-Tillotson College. More about Huston-Tillotson can be read [here](#).





January 22, 1968 Houston based mogul, Hobart Taylor, Jr. resigned as director of the US Export-Import Bank after having been appointed to the federal government's official export credit agency in 1965. Born into wealth in Texarkana, Texas, Hobart Taylor, Jr. was an attorney, civil servant and the Executive Vice Chairman of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities under President John F. Kennedy in 1962. Taylor is credited with coining the phrase "affirmative action" while leading this initiative. He attended Prairie View Normal and Industrial College in 1939 and received his J.D. degree from the University of Michigan in 1943. More can be read about Hobart Taylor, Jr. [here](#).

January 25, 2001 Artist, John Thomas Biggers, died in his home of Houston, Texas. Born in North Carolina in 1924, Biggers was profoundly influenced by the sociopolitical murals of Mexican painters like Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. With an exhibition history that included New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1943, Biggers moved to Houston as the founding chair of the art department at Texas Southern University. From 1949-1983 John Biggers inspired many students. His murals can be seen across the US including at Hampton, VA, Winston Salem, NC, and Houston, TX. More about John T. Biggers can be read [here](#).



January 26, 1892 Bessie Coleman, was born in Atlanta, Texas. Coleman is the first African-American woman to hold a pilot's license. While opportunities to study aviation for African-Americans and women were nil in 1920, the determined Coleman pursued a scholarship to study in France. Nicknamed *Queen Bess*, Coleman became a high-profile stunt-flying pilot in air shows organized throughout the United States. Bessie Coleman died in 1926, at the age of 34 in a plane crash in Jacksonville, Florida. An entrepreneur, she aspired to open an aviation school before her untimely death, but her accomplishments continue to inspire generations of aviators world-wide. More about Bessie Coleman can be read [here](#).

January 31, 1934 Philanthropist, stage and screen star, Etta Moten Barnett sang for President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at a White House dinner. Etta Moten was born in Weimar, Texas in 1901. As a classical opera singer, she paved the way for African-American female performers. Moten studied music and drama at Western University in Kansas. She moved to New York City in 1931, where she was casted in multiple Broadway musical and film productions. In 1934 Moten became the first African-American woman to perform at the White House in the 20th century. More about Etta Moten can be read [here](#).

