Today in History - June 23

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Today's Stories: Texas Annexation | Bob Fosse

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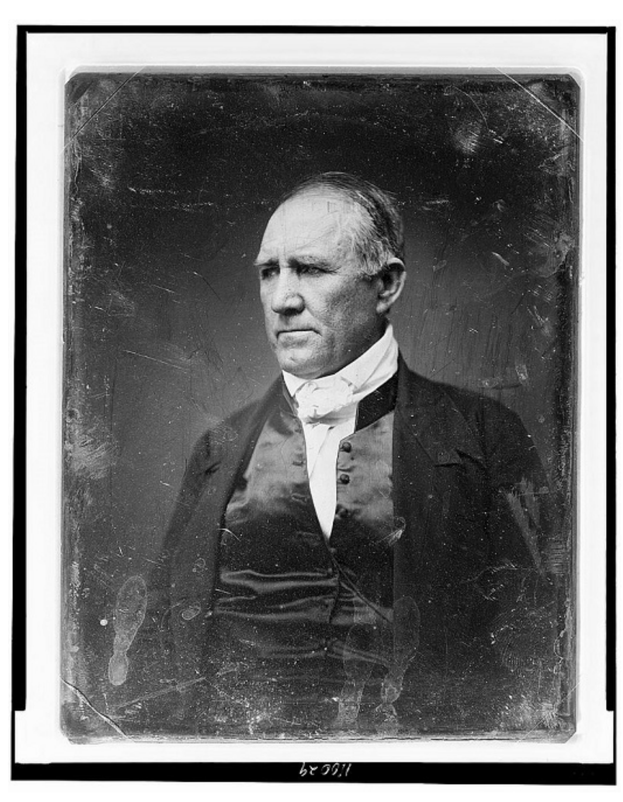
Texas Annexation

On **June 23**, 1845, a joint resolution of the Congress of Texas voted in favor of annexation by the United States. The leaders of the republic first voted for annexation in 1836, soon after gaining independence from Mexico, but the U.S. Congress was unwilling to admit another state that permitted slavery. Sam Houston, commander of the Texas army during the fight for independence from Mexico and the first president of the Republic of Texas, was a strong advocate of annexation.



Sam Houston... Mathew B. Brady, [between 1848 and 1850]. Daguerreotypes. Prints & Photographs Division

In 1845, the political climate proved more favorable to the request for statehood. On December 29, 1845, Texas officially became the twenty-eighth state in the Union although the formal transfer of government did not take place until February 19, 1846. A unique provision in its agreement with the United States permitted Texas to retain title to its public lands. Further, Texas was annexed as a slave state.

Texas is divided into various regions characterized by distinct cultures and climates. East Texas includes the forested area known as the "Big Thicket" and some of the wet, coastal marsh area. The region produces cotton, rice, and sugar cane, and its economy is centered on the Gulf Coast's petrochemical and shipping industries. The eastern part of Texas continues to be culturally tied to the Deep South. West Texas includes the Davis Mountains, the northern High Plains of the Panhandle, and some of the Hill Country. Cattle and sheep ranching continue to thrive in the legendary land of the cowboy. Near the national border, Mexican culture remains particularly influential.

Camp Wagon on a Texas Roundup. William Henry Jackson, photographer, [ca. 1900]. Detroit Publishing Company. Prints & Photographs Division

> *Our roundup was the hardest of all work we had to do, but the most interesting, at least it was to most of us, because we then had roping and bul-dogging to do.*
>
> "Dave Hoffman." Sheldon F. Gauthier, interviewer; Fort Worth, Texas, ca. 1936-39. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940. Manuscript Division

One of the more than 400 Texans interviewed in *American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940*, early settler Mrs. Emma Falconer, described the state's natural beauty:

> *...let me tell you my impression when I came to Texas and saw the sunrise, the Texas Bluebonnets and the wild flowers, the Indian head, the "Yellow Rose of Texas", the wild verbena, and all the many beautiful Texas flowers. The traveller may be oblivious to the wonders of his own land and feel that distance lends enchantment, he may grow rapturous over other sunny clines, but if there is a sunnier or more beautiful country than Texas, I have not seen it.*
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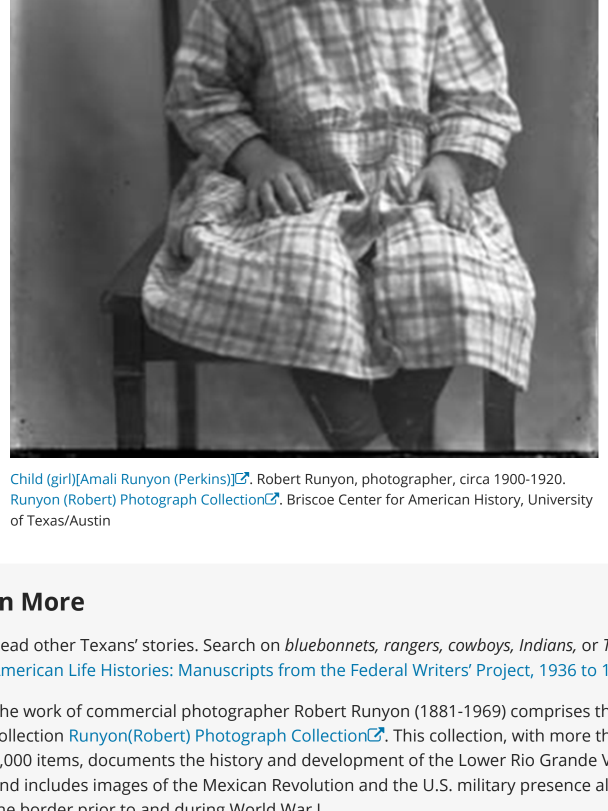
> "Mrs. Emma Falconer." Miss Effie Cowan, interviewer; Marlin, Texas, ca. 1936-1939. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940. Manuscript Division



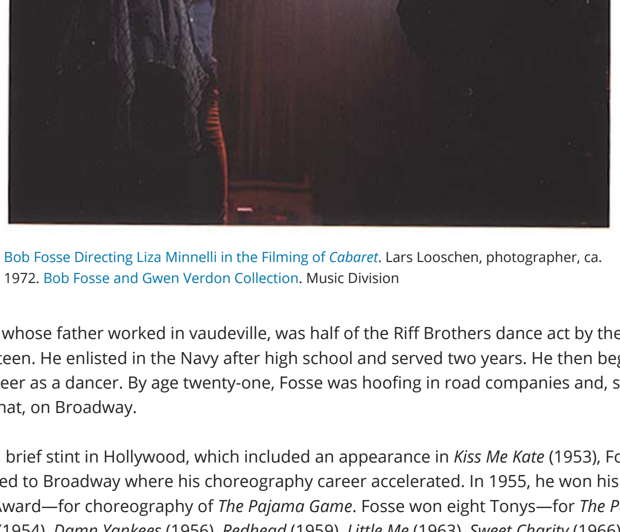
Child (girl)[Amali Runyon (Perkins)]. Robert Runyon, photographer, circa 1900-1920. Runyon (Robert) Photograph Collection. Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas/Austin

Learn More

- Read other Texans' stories. Search on *bluebonnets, rangers, cowboys, Indians,* or *Texas* in American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940.
- The work of commercial photographer Robert Runyon (1881-1969) comprises the collection Runyon(Robert) Photograph Collection. This collection, with more than 8,000 items, documents the history and development of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and includes images of the Mexican Revolution and the U.S. military presence along the border prior to and during World War I.
- For more images, search the collections of Photos & Prints on *Texas*. The following collections are particularly rich in material concerning Texas.
  - Highsmith (Carol M.) Archive
  - Gottscho-Schleisner Collection
  - Panoramic Photographs
  - Detroit Publishing Company
  - Denver Public Library Digital Collections
- Search on *Texas* in Today in History to learn more about the events in Texas history such as the fall of the Alamo on March 6, 1836, and the hurricane that decimated Galveston Island on September 8, 1900.
- Browse Railroad Maps, 1828 to 1900 by geographic location, selecting the state of Texas or, under Regions, the southwest, to see images illustrating the growth of travel, settlement, industry and agriculture in the state. See Panoramic Maps for bird's-eye-view maps of Texas towns at the turn of the twentieth century.

Bob Fosse

Robert Louis "Bob" Fosse was born in Chicago, Illinois, on **June 23**, 1927. Over the course of an almost fifty-year career as a performer, director, and writer, Fosse emerged as one of the finest choreographers to work in American musical film and theater.



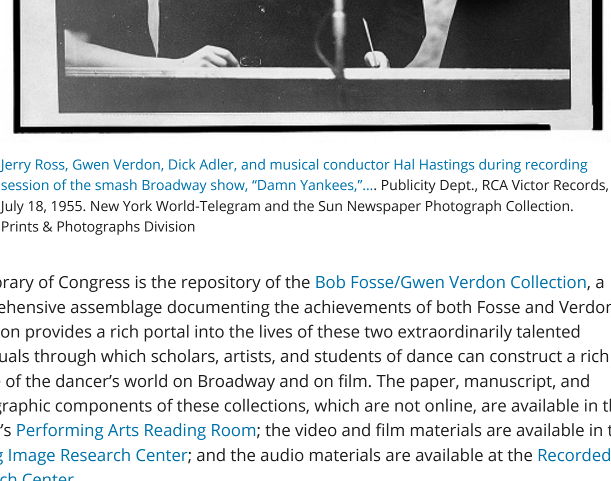
Bob Fosse Directing Liza Minnelli in the Filming of *Cabaret*. Lars Looschen, photographer, ca. 1972. Bob Fosse and Gwen Verdon Collection. Music Division

Fosse, whose father worked in vaudeville, was half of the Riff Brothers dance act by the age of thirteen. He enlisted in the Navy after high school and served two years. He then began his career as a dancer. By age twenty-one, Fosse was hoofing in road companies and, soon after that, on Broadway.

After a brief stint in Hollywood, which included an appearance in *Kiss Me Kate* (1953), Fosse returned to Broadway where his choreography career accelerated. In 1955, he won his first Tony Award—for choreography of *The Pajama Game*. Fosse won eight Tonys—for *The Pajama Game* (1954), *Damn Yankees* (1956), *Redhead* (1959), *Little Me* (1963), *Sweet Charity* (1966), *Pippin* (1973), *Dancin'* (1978), and *Big Deal* (1986). He also won Drama Desk Awards as choreographer and director for some of the same productions.

Fosse returned to Hollywood as a choreographer and director. His films included *Cabaret* (1972), *Lenny* (1974), and *All That Jazz* (1979). Fosse was the first director in history to win Oscar (*Cabaret*), Tony (*Pippin*), and Emmy (*Liza with a Z*) awards in the same year (1973).

Fosse's frequent collaborator and leading lady was the dancer, actress, and singer, Gwen Verdon. In 1956 Miss Verdon won the Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Lola in *Damn Yankees;* Fosse received a Tony for Best Choreography. Fosse and Verdon also worked together in *New Girl in Town* (1957), *Redhead* (1959), *Sweet Charity* (1966), and *Chicago* (1977). They married in 1960 and while they were separated when he died on September 23, 1987, they remained friends. Verdon was the artistic advisor to the Tony Award-winning musical *Fosse* (1999), a musical and dance revue.



Jerry Ross, Gwen Verdon, Dick Adler, and musical conductor Hal Hastings during recording session of the smash Broadway show, "Damn Yankees,".... Publicity Dept., RCA Victor Records, July 18, 1955. New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection. Prints & Photographs Division

The Library of Congress is the repository of the Bob Fosse/Gwen Verdon Collection, a comprehensive assemblage documenting the achievements of both Fosse and Verdon. This collection provides a rich portal into the lives of these two extraordinarily talented individuals through which scholars, artists, and students of dance can construct a rich picture of the dancer's world on Broadway and on film. The paper, manuscript, and photographic components of these collections, which are not online, are available in the Library's Performing Arts Reading Room; the video and film materials are available in the Moving Image Research Center; and the audio materials are available at the Recorded Sound Research Center.

Learn More

- An overview of the collections of the Library of Congress Music Division is provided in Music, Theater, Dance: an Illustrated Guide.
- Search Today in History on the words *dance, theater,* or *film* to learn more about the performing arts and artists. For example, see features on Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and on the work of Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine.
- Read *Modern Dancing* written by one of the twentieth century's most famous dance teams, Irene and Vernon Castle. This illustrated manual presents a wide variety of dances popular during the ragtime era. Search the collection An American Ballroom Companion: Dance Instruction Manuals, ca. 1490 to 1920 to find manuals on other dance modes such as ballet, clog dancing, and country dance.
- Traveling Culture: Circuit Chautauqua in the Twentieth Century with nearly 8,000 promotional advertisements, publicity brochures, and flyers for a variety of performers as well as for teachers, lecturers, politicians, and others who traveled the circuits at the beginning of the twentieth century, also is a rich source of materials. Search, for example on *dancer* or *choreographer* to view such items.

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