

Aaron Douglas
1899–1979

May 26, 1899	Aaron Douglas is born in Topeka, Kan.
Fall 1913– Spring 1917	Attends Topeka High School
Jan. 1918– Spring 1922	Enrolls in the School of Fine Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and earns his bachelor’s degree in fine arts
Fall 1923– Spring 1925	Teaches art at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri
Summer 1924	Enrolls in the summer session at the University of Kansas
Summer 1925	Moves to Harlem in New York City; studies with German émigré artist Winold Reiss; begins contributing work to Opportunity, a journal published by the National Urban League
Fall 1925	Takes a job in the mailroom of the NAACP’s journal the Crisis at the invitation of W. E. B. Du Bois; contributes illustrations to Alain Locke’s influential book “The New Negro: An Interpretation”
1926	Creates covers for Opportunity and the Crisis; marries Alta Sawyer in June; co-founds the short-lived FIRE!! A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Younger Negro Artists
1927	Joins the staff of the Crisis as its art critic; illustrates James Weldon Johnson’s “God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse” and designs dust jackets for the work of such authors as Arthur Huff Fauset, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen; paints a mural for Club Ebony in Harlem
1928	Receives a fellowship from the Barnes Foundation; serves as art editor for Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life
1929	Illustrates Paul Morand’s “Black Magic” and André Salmon’s “The Black Venus;” designs dust jackets for the work of Wallace Thurman and Claude McKay
1930	As an artist in residence at Fisk University in Nashville, paints a cycle of murals for the Cravath Memorial Library; creates the photomural “Birth o’ the Blues” for the College Inn Room of the Sherman Hotel in Chicago
1931–1932	Studies art at the Académie Scandinave in Paris; returns to New York in July 1932 and settles into the prosperous Sugar Hill neighborhood of Harlem
1933	First solo exhibition at Caz Delbo Gallery in New York in May; paints the mural “Evolution of Negro Dance” for the Harlem YMCA
1934	Participates in the annual traveling exhibition sponsored by the Harmon Foundation; commissioned by the PWAP (Public Works of Art Project) to paint a mural program entitled “Aspects of Negro Life” for the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library

1935	Becomes first president of the Harlem Artists Guild
1936	Participates in the first American Artists' Congress; paints a four-mural cycle for the Hall of Negro Life at the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas; honored by a one-person exhibition at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
1937	Receives a Julius Rosenwald Foundation fellowship to travel to historically black colleges in the South
1938	Accepts a position as an assistant professor of art education at Fisk University in Nashville; receives a second Rosenwald fellowship to paint in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Virgin Islands
1941-44	Enrolls in Teachers College at Columbia College in New York where he earns a master's degree in 1944
1951-1952	Receives two Carnegie grants-in-aid through the Improvement of Teaching Project to paint on the East and West coasts
1955	Enrolls in a course on printmaking and enameling at the Brooklyn Museum Art School
1956	Travels to Europe and West Africa with wife Alta and friends Dr. W.W. and Grace Goens during the summer
Dec. 29, 1958	Alta dies unexpectedly at the Wilmington, Del., home of the Goenses
1963	Visits the White House as a guest of President John F. Kennedy for centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation
1965	Restores his mural cycle at Fisk University during the summer
1966	Retires from Fisk University
1969-1971	Initiates a second campaign to restore his murals at Fisk University; travels back to Topeka, Kan. for a retrospective exhibition held at the Mulvane Art Museum on the campus of Washburn University in the fall of 1970; is honored with a second retrospective in the spring of 1971 at Fisk University
1972	Fisk University designates a section of its new John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library the "Aaron Douglas Wing"
1973	Receives his honorary doctorate from Fisk in May
1974	Is featured in the filmstrip Profiles of Black Achievement
1975	Presents his papers to Fisk University's Franklin Library
Feb. 2, 1979	Dies in Nashville