

TWO AMERICAS • LUMINARIES • CELEBRITY • LIVING RECORD

# The Homecoming Every Time

*Beyoncé and the Reclamation of Black Southern Sound*

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*Contribution Track • Living Record (2020–Present) • Houston, Texas*

## Who She Is

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Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter was born September 4, 1981, in Houston, Texas, and rose to fame with the group Destiny's Child before launching a solo career with *Dangerously in Love* (2003). Over the two decades since, her work has moved increasingly and deliberately toward the explicit documentation of Black Southern history and identity — turning a pop career into something closer to an ongoing act of public historiography.

## Formation and Lemonade

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Released the day before her 2016 Super Bowl 50 halftime performance, "Formation" and its video confronted Hurricane Katrina's failures directly — a police cruiser sinking into floodwater — and closed on a Black child in a hoodie facing down riot police, cutting to graffiti reading "Stop shooting us," a direct visual reference to the Black Lives Matter movement. The full visual album *Lemonade* (2016) drew on a lineage of Black Southern blues women, from Bessie Smith to Sister Rosetta Tharpe, filmed at sites including a former Confederate fort in Louisiana destroyed by Katrina, and closed a segment titled "Forward" around Sybrina Fulton, Lesley McSpadden, and Gwen Carr — the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner — each holding a photograph of her son.

In 2018 Beyoncé became the first Black woman to headline Coachella, building her set — since nicknamed "Beychella" — around a full HBCU-style marching band, majorette dancers, and the visual language of Black Greek-letter step and stroll traditions. The 2019 documentary and live album *Homecoming* captured the performance for a wider audience; 55 percent of the film's first-week U.S. viewers were African American.

## Renaissance and Cowboy Carter

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*Renaissance* (2022) was built explicitly as a tribute to Black and queer pioneers of disco, house, and dance music, drawn from a lineage the mainstream music industry has often credited to others. *Cowboy Carter* (2024) reached further back, reclaiming the Black roots of American country and Americana music that the genre's commercial history has largely erased; at the 2025 Grammy Awards it won Album of the Year, Best Country Album, and Best Country Duo/Group Performance — making Beyoncé, per most reporting, the first Black woman in a quarter century to win Album of the Year, since Lauryn Hill's 1999 win, a distinction worth stating precisely rather than as "the first ever." The album received no Country Music Association Award nominations, a result widely read in music press as evidence of continued resistance within the country industry to a Black artist's claim on the genre's history — an interpretation this entry attributes to that coverage rather than presenting as settled fact.

## NC Local Lens

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No connection was found between Beyoncé and Fayetteville or Cumberland County specifically. At the state level, her *Formation* World Tour played Raleigh in May 2016 (a show evacuated mid-performance for lightning), and her *Renaissance* World Tour played Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium on August 9, 2023, drawing more than 53,000 fans. Her 2024 *Cowboy Carter* Tour included no North Carolina date at all. This entry states plainly that these are statewide, not Cumberland County, connections, and notes a separate 2006 Walmart shareholders' meeting appearance in Fayetteville, Arkansas — not North Carolina — as a documented false-positive risk for future research.

## Sourcing Caveats for Future Sessions

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**"First Black woman to win Album of the Year" framing:** precise framing is "first in 25 years," referencing Lauryn Hill's 1999 win — verify exact wording against a Recording Academy release before publication.

**Fayetteville, Arkansas vs. Fayetteville, NC:** a 2006 Walmart shareholders' meeting appearance is in Arkansas and must not be conflated with North Carolina in any future indexing.

**Living, active figure:** tour history, award totals, and album output should be re-checked at time of any republication.

## Citations

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*Chicago Notes-Bibliography style, primary and institutional sources.*

1. "67th Annual GRAMMY Awards Winners List," Recording Academy, February 2025, <https://www.grammy.com/>.
2. Beyoncé, *Lemonade*, visual album, HBO, April 23, 2016.
3. Beyoncé, *Homecoming*, live album and documentary, Netflix, April 17, 2019.
4. "Formation World Tour" and "Renaissance World Tour," tour date archives, accessed September 13, 2026.
5. Coverage of Cowboy Carter's CMA Award nomination results, 2024–2025 music press.

*Prepared by the Two Americas research process. Verify all figures against primary sources before publication if stronger originals become available.*