Hilária Pereira Ernesto da Silva, known by her nickname Tia Ciata, was born in 1854 in Brazil. She was considered to be Afro-Brazilian, which meant that she was a descendent of African slaves who were brought to Brazil in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. She moved to the city of Rio de Janeiro and lived in a neighborhood called “Little Africa.” Tia Ciata was one of the female leaders of the community because she hosted parties at her home that honored Afro-Brazilian culture. She was brave to do this because, at this time in history, the Brazilian government made public celebrations of Afro-Brazilian cultures (like singing and dancing) illegal.

Tia Ciata thought it was important to preserve this culture. The musicians and artists she welcomed in her house created the first ever samba song in 1916. Samba is a type of music and dance that has its roots in Afro-Brazilian culture and is now famous all
over the world. By fostering the creation of samba, Tia Ciata helped it become so popular and famous around the country that the Brazilian president eventually made it part of the Brazilian national identity. When people think about Brazil today, they often think about the samba.

Tia Ciata died in 1924. Considered by many people to be the first patron of samba musicians, there was a school established in her honor that taught disadvantaged children in the city.