

What Juneteenth Means

Juneteenth is the newest of the 12 United States federal holidays. Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of all enslaved people in the United States of America. While there are sketchy details surrounding the announcement of the emancipation of slaves in Galveston Texas. What is for sure was it was the last territory to surrender to the Union troops that was said to have come from Fort Monroe Va. The general that delivered the news was Gordon Granger in the form of General Order #3. The sketchy details were whether he read the General Order from the balcony of a prominent hotel or whether he posted the General Order on the wall of the AME Zion church. Regardless the message was delivered to the furthest point of the southern secession states.

Even though the federal order of the Emancipation Proclamation was issued freeing all slaves across the entire United States in 1863. Southern States ignored it and continued to practice chattel slavery which happened to be the most brutal form of slavery known to man. The slave holders not only refused to accept the presidential order but, continued fighting to keep their slaves after the official end of slavery at Appomattox April 9th, 1865. You see as General Sherman chased the southern slave holder's south, they took their slaves with them creating a large amount of hardcore slave owners and slaves in Galveston and they didn't want to except that the South had lost the war and had to free their slaves.

The irony of the whole emancipation Juneteenth thing was that all was required of the defeated South for a conditional pardon for seceding from the Union and murdering more Americans than any war in history was only two conditions. One; They had to admit the South had surrendered and lost the war, and two; slavery was no longer legal and slave owners had to free their slaves. Some punishment for the destruction that the Civil war had caused.

So, Juneteenth is the celebration of the commemoration of day that the last slaves were notified of their freedom to fight for themselves and an opportunity for the slaves to overcome the obstacles that white America would continue to place before descendants of former slaves. So, while Juneteenth pales in comparison to the government supported chattel slavery but, it's something of an Independence Day, a jubilee day, a Freedom Day, a day to celebrate the resilience of a captured people that were enslaved and still rise even unto today.