

Learn About Juneteenth

Introduction

Juneteenth, the blending of the words June and nineteen, celebrates the end of slavery in the United States. It is also known as **Emancipation Day**, Juneteenth Independence Day, and Black Independence Day. It pays **homage** to the day enslaved people of Galveston, Texas were informed that the Civil War had ended and they were now free. Although Juneteenth is not a federal holiday, most states and the District of Columbia have passed **legislation** recognizing it as a holiday or a day of **observance**.

History

The Emancipation **Proclamation** abolished slavery in the Confederate States of America, which originally included South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. However, it would only go into effect when the Civil War ended.

The states involved in the rebellion were driven by **agriculture** which relied heavily on the labor of enslaved African and African-American people. State leaders viewed President Abraham Lincoln, a stark opposer to slavery who won the election of 1860, as a threat to the institution. They soon **seceded** from the Union and formed their own government with Jefferson Davis as President.

But while the Emancipation Proclamation **abolished** slavery, it wasn't until June 19, 1865, two-and-a-half years later, that Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas to deliver the news that all 250,000 enslaved people within the state, were free. Why did it take so long? No one knows for certain, but there is **speculation** that troops wanted to allow for one last cotton harvest before freeing the enslaved. Another theory is that because there were few Union soldiers in Texas who could **enforce** the Emancipation Proclamation most enslavers had not adhered to its decree. When Major General Granger Gordon arrived in Galveston, he read the following General Orders, Number 3:

