

# JUNETEENTH

JUNE 19TH, 1865 | EMANCIPATION DAY



*Juneteenth Day Celebration, Eastwoods Park, Texas, 1900. Photo from Austin History Center.*

## What is Juneteenth?

Compiled by Arianna Varuolo-Clarke and Carly Peltier

Juneteenth is the celebration of the end of slavery in the United States and is also known as Emancipation Day, Juneteenth Independence Day, and Black Independence Day.

On June 19th, 1865 Major General Gordon Granger and 2,000 Union Soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas to announce the end of the Civil War and the end of slavery. With their arrival, the 250,000 African Americans that had remained enslaved in Texas were freed. Despite the Emancipation Proclamation two and a half years earlier on January 1st, 1863, many slave owners in the Confederate states continued to keep slaves. Juneteenth (June 19th shortened) marked the emancipation of the last enslaved African Americans in the United States and has become a symbolic date that represents African American Freedom.

Major General Gordon Granger's announcement, *General Order Number 3*, reads:

*The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property, between former masters and slaves and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor. The Freedmen are advised to remain at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts; and they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.*

# Let's celebrate!

Juneteenth has been celebrated by Texans since 1866 through community events like parades, cookouts, prayer gatherings, historical and cultural readings, and musical performances. Some communities even purchased land just for Juneteenth celebrations like Emancipation Park in Houston, TX.

Once families began to emigrate from Texas to other parts of the country, Juneteenth celebrations followed them. Juneteenth became a Texas state holiday on January 1, 1980. Al Edwards, a freshman state representative, put forward the bill H.B. 1016 that made Texas the first state to grant this emancipation celebration. Since 1980, 45 other states (including NY since 2004) and the District of Columbia have also commemorated or recognized this day.

Today, Juneteenth is marked by celebrations, guest speakers, picnics, and family gatherings with time for reflection and rejoicing!

## Events:

[How to Celebrate Juneteenth in N.Y.C. - NY Times](#)  
[Defend Black Lives Events around the Country today](#)  
[Juneteenth Festival](#) (Virtual, 6/20/2020 10am - 6pm)

## Recommended reading:

[So you want to learn about Juneteenth? - NY Times](#)  
[Juneteenth.com](#)  
[Petition to make Juneteenth a National Holiday](#)  
[What is Juneteenth? And, why is it in the news?](#)

## Sources:

[Juneteenth: Fact Sheet](#)  
[The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth](#)  
[Juneteenth: Our Other Independence Day](#)  
[What Is Juneteenth?](#)

*Juneteenth Day Celebration, Texas, 1900. Photo from Austin History Center.*

