



June 19, 2023

History

Juneteenth is a day of commemoration, celebration, learning, and honoring the freedom and resilience of African-American Ancestors. Juneteenth was first celebrated on June 19, 1866, because that was the first anniversary of the day Black people in Galveston were freed. The celebration included a parade, food, family time and remembrance of struggle and triumph. It ushered in the Reconstruction era in US history. A time of hope and progress. A time to restore.

When we tell the story of liberation from enslavement, the heroes we teach about are General Granger, President Lincoln, Thaddeus Stevens, and others. We must tell this story beginning with the African-Americans/Black people who struggled, resisted, and fought for their own liberation. They had many co-conspirators working with and in their shared human interests. Both free and enslaved Black people were deeply motivated to be liberated.

Freed Black people did not always experience freedom right away. Slaveowners were given agency to determine how and when they informed their enslaved people about their liberation and the date of effectiveness. There were over 250,000 Black people held in bondage in Texas at the announcement of Juneteenth. Here is an example enslaved, “a former slave named Katie Darling continued working for her mistress another six years (She ” ‘whip me after the war just like she did ‘fore,’ ” Darling said). Below is the text of Executive Order 3, which effectively brought legal enslavement of Africans/Blacks to a legal end.

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 quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.—[General Orders, Number 3](#); Headquarters District of Texas, Galveston, June 19, 1865

Resources

- [Juneteenth Resource](#) Curated by DREA Coach, Beatrice Butler
- [CHRE Juneteenth Unit Plan Goals](#) Dr. Gholdy Muhammad
- [History of the Juneteenth Flag](#) Article
- [Juneteenth Celebration](#) Video
- [Lift Every Voice and Sing](#) Poem and Video
- [Teaching Juneteenth](#) Article
- [The Emancipation Proclamation](#) Document
- [The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro](#) Article and Videos
- [The Story Behind Juneteenth](#) Video
- [What is Juneteenth?](#) Video
- [What to the Slave is Fourth of July? James Earl Jones Reading](#) Video
- [Juneteenth Digital Toolkit](#) Article and Resources
- [Descendent](#) Movie
- [High On the Hog](#) Movie

Books

PK-5

- *A Flag for Juneteenth* by Kim Taylor
- *All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom*
- *Free at Last: A Juneteenth Poem* by Sojourner Kincaid Rolle
- *Freedom Rings: A Children's Book about Juneteenth* by Sharday Moser
- *Freedom's Gifts: A Juneteenth Story* by Valerie Wesley
- *Juneteenth* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
- *Juneteenth for Mazie* by Floyd Cooper
- *Let's Celebrate Juneteenth* by Mudpuppy and T. Abari
- *Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth* by Alice Faye Duncan
- *The Juneteenth Story* by Alliah L. Agostini
- *The Night Before Freedom: A Juneteenth Story* by Glenda Armand

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- *Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom* by Charles Taylor

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- *Juneteenth* by Ralph Ellison