JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION
DAY/JUNE 19

CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH

The first Juneteenth celebration took place on June 19, 1866, one year after enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas first learned that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. On the one-year anniversary of this day one could find celebrants in Galveston holding prayer meetings, singing spirituals, and wearing new clothing as a way of representing their newfound freedom.

Since then, Juneteenth celebrations have extended far beyond the borders of Galveston, Texas. Today, celebrations are ones of joy and pride, as well as a reminder of the past and the need to persevere. Celebrations across the U.S. can take on many forms: from fireworks and cookouts, to a day of shopping at only Black-owned businesses, or one of rest and reflection.

JUNETEENTH

June 19th, or “Juneteenth” as it is more commonly known, has long been celebrated by African American communities. Though some may have only recently learned of the holiday, many Black communities across the United States have been celebrating the day for over 150 years. The holiday commemorates the day in which enslaved African Americans in Texas learned that they had gained their freedom, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation had already taken effect.

Though most freed and enslaved African Americans in confederate states learned that the Emancipation Proclamation was made effective on January 1, 1863, it could not be enforced in areas still under confederate rule, like the state of Texas. African Americans in the state remained enslaved until June 19, 1865, when Union army troops arrived in Texas and announced to the more than 250,000 enslaved African Americans that they were free by executive decree.

Though the holiday originated in Texas, today one can find Juneteenth celebrations all across the U.S.

(Excerpt from https://bmsabric.s.csujc.edu/bisse-post/historical-legacy-juneteenth. Celebration information from nytimes.com and britannica.com.)

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