



Juneteenth
June 2021

History



- The Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect on January 1, 1863, which declared more than 3 million slaves living in Confederate States to be free.
- More than 2 years would pass, however, before the news reached African Americans living in Texas.
- On June 19, 1865 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas where the states residents finally learned that slavery had been abolished.

History



- Despite the announcement, Texas slave owners weren't too eager to part with what they felt was their property. When freed people tried to leave, many of them were beaten, lynched, or murdered.
- In 1979, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday. Today, 47 states recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday, while efforts to make it a national holiday have so far stalled in Congress.
- Celebrations waned during the era of Jim Crow Laws until the civil rights movement, when the Poor People's march took place led by Martin Luther King.
- The march brought Juneteenth back to the forefront, and when march participants took the celebrations back to their home states, the holiday was reborn.

Celebrations

- Some cities and groups have Miss Juneteenth contests.
- There is a Juneteenth Flag of Freedom. Each year a Juneteenth Flag raising ceremony is held in Galveston.
- The star in the middle pays homage to Texas, while the bursting "new star" on the "horizon" of the red and blue fields represents a new freedom and a new people.

