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DEI Zone: The eZine for the HRC DEI Enthusiast!

The Juneteenth Edition

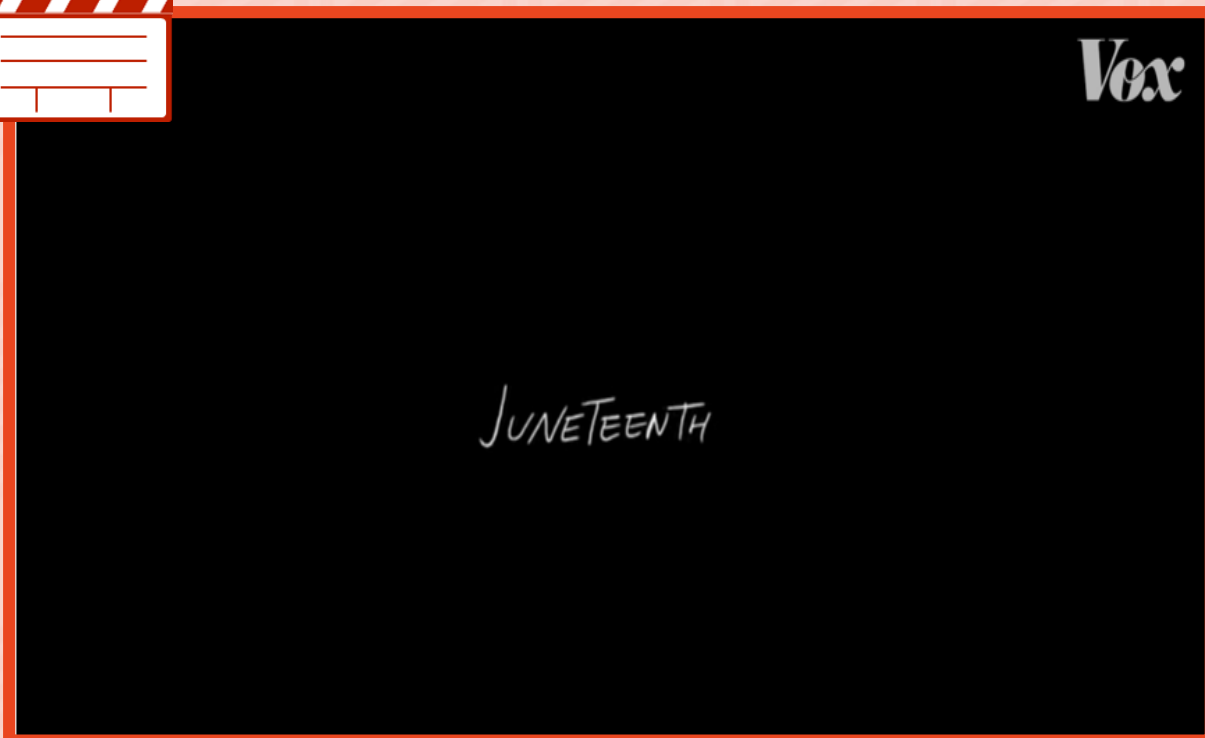
June 2021

THE ORIGINS OF JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on **June 19th** that the Union soldiers, led by **Major General Gordon Granger**, landed at **Galveston, Texas** with news that the war had ended and that the **enslaved were now free**. Note that this was **two and a half years after** President Lincoln's **Emancipation Proclamation** - which had **become official January 1, 1863**. The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new **Executive Order**. However, with the **surrender of General Lee in April of 1865**, and the **arrival of General Granger's regiment**, the **forces** were finally strong enough to **influence and overcome the resistance**.

Later attempts to explain this **two and a half year delay** have yielded **several versions** that have been handed down through the years. Often told is the story of a messenger who was **murdered** on his way to Texas with the news of freedom. Another is that the news was **deliberately withheld** by the enslavers to maintain the labor force on the plantations. And another is that federal troops actually waited for the slave owners to reap the benefits of **one last cotton harvest** before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. All of which, or none of these versions could be true. Certainly, for some, **President Lincoln's authority** over the rebellious states was in question. Whatever the reasons, conditions in Texas **remained status quo** well beyond what was statutory.

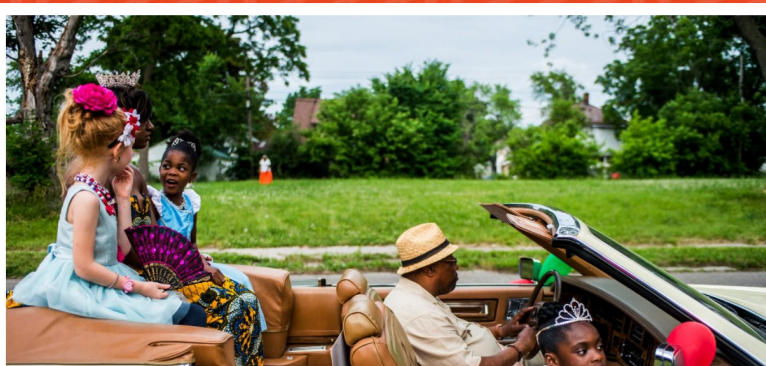
SOURCE: [Excerpt from History of Juneteenth from Juneteenth.com](https://www.juneteenth.com/history)



HOW TO CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH:

- Watch a movie or read a book about Juneteenth History and Black Liberation
- Support Black-owned businesses in your area
- Donate to Black-led organizations in your area
- Express your support for legislation to make Juneteenth a national holiday

RECOMMENDED LEARNING



So You Want to Learn About
Juneteenth?

