

# JUNETEENTH “EMANCIPATION DAY” “FREEDOM DAY”



*“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 Order, No. 3, Headquarters District of Texas, Galveston, Texas - June 19, 1865<sup>5</sup>



In 1863, Texas was largely controlled by forces fighting for the Confederate states in the Civil War, which opposed the abolition of slavery. With the above General Order, establishing the Union Army’s authority over Texas, the basis for Juneteenth as a holiday was created. The newly freed slaves held large public celebrations to lay the base for future activities. The arrival of the Union Army was two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln (January 1, 1863). Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest running African American holiday.

“In 1980, Texas became the first state to adopt Juneteenth as a holiday. It is officially recognized in all but three states: Hawaii, North Dakota and South Dakota.”<sup>2</sup> In April 2021, the North Dakota House voted in favor of the state observing Juneteenth as a ceremonial holiday, and is awaiting Governor sign-off.<sup>4</sup>

The Juneteenth Flag was created by activist Ben Haith, founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation (NJCF) and with the help of collaborators, and Boston-based illustrator Lisa Jeanne Graf. The Juneteenth Flag consists of a rectangle, with the lower part red and the upper part blue, and a 5-pointed star in the center. The star has dual meanings: first for Texas, “The Lone Star State” and second representing the freedom of African Americans in all 50 states. The burst, or “Nova” outline around the star represents “new beginnings” and the curve in the flag is for a “new horizon.” “The red, white and blue represents the American flag, a reminder that slaves and their descendants were and are Americans.”<sup>3</sup>



Sources: 1. <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth>  
2. <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/06/19/juneteenth-texas-emancipation-day/> (left photo as well).  
3. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/19/us/freedom-day-juneteenth-flag-meaning-trnd/index.html>  
4. <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2021/04/06/north-dakota-legislature-oks-juneteenth-ceremonial-holiday>  
5. <https://www.nytimes.com/1865/07/07/archives/from-texas-important-orders-by-general-granger-surrender-of-senator.html>  
Top right photo: [ushrnetwork.org](http://ushrnetwork.org) Juneteenth Flag photo: [united-states-flag.com/juneteenth](http://united-states-flag.com/juneteenth)

