

FFWPU USA: Happy Juneteenth - Remember the plight of enslaved Africans

Demian Dunkley
June 19, 2023



Happy Juneteenth! June 19 - known as Juneteenth - became one of 11 federal holidays in 2021 when the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act was signed into U.S. legislation. Juneteenth celebrates the 1865 emancipation of more than four million African Americans who were enslaved in the United States.

The international cross-cultural Unification movement has long been a stronghold in Africa. True Parents extensively traveled there during world tours, sharing messages of God's hope for peace and unity among all people, and held Marriage Blessing ceremonies to establish God-centered couples and families.

While embracing the African people, True Parents shared prayers of healing and repentance for the sorrowful history of its enslaved people. In True Mother's memoir, *Mother of Peace* (2020), she poignantly recalled her experiences in Africa.

"The sense of profound grief I felt when I first stepped onto African soil in the 1970s remains in my heart," she wrote. "I prayed: How can I help heal this continent's wounds and bring harmony and oneness of heart?"

True Mother wept and prayed as she [stood at Gorée Island's Door of No Return](#) in 2018 - the site where more than 20 million Africans were sold and shipped off to slavery in Europe and the Americas.

"An intense pain arose in my heart," she recalled. "I already was feeling that the bitter tears of grief shed by thousands of captives in transit through that island could fill the world's oceans."

True Mother liberated Gorée Island with her prayers, and donated a boat for urgent care transport to the mainland of Senegal. Gorée's mayor also presented her with the Gorée Island Pilgrim Award.

As Juneteenth recognizes the plight of enslaved Africans and the weight of 400 years of suffering, it's also a time to reflect on those affected during a grim period in America's history, so that we may bring peace to their ancestors and descendants. Let's celebrate this Juneteenth and the freedom that finally came to our African brothers and sisters.

You can learn more about Juneteenth [here](#).

5th Anniversary of True Mother's Visit to Gorée Island



January 19 marks the 5th anniversary of True Mother's 2018 visit to Gorée Island, where she tearfully prayed for the island's ancestors and a new heavenly Africa. The small island nation has a painful history serving as the largest slave-trading center on the African coast for 400 years, from the 15th to 19th century.

"I forged a profound relationship with Gorée Island," wrote True Mother in her memoir, *Mother of Peace* (2020). "I wanted to visit Gorée Island and liberate the historical agony and heartbreak of all the Africans who suffered due to the scourge of slavery."

During her speech at the [World Africa Summit](#), held in Senegal the day before visiting Gorée, True Mother said that Africa is the continent that has suffered the most. She later detailed her trip to Gorée in her memoir, recalling how "an intense pain arose in my heart" as she approached the island. "I was already feeling that the bitter tears of grief shed by thousands of captives in transit through the island could fill the world's oceans," she wrote. "The beautiful site that we were approaching must be the most sorrowful island in the world."





Gorée's mayor, Austin Senghor, welcomed True Mother with open arms as he presented her with the Gorée Island Pilgrim Award. After visiting the island's House of Slaves and its Door of No Return – a museum and memorial of the Atlantic slave trade and final exit point of slaves from Africa – True Mother returned to West Africa in April 2019 to host a special Marriage Blessing ceremony in Senegal that included Gorée's deputy mayor.

True Mother has long spoken of the great beauty and mission of the African continent and its people. As we honor the anniversary of her historic visit to Gorée Island and its liberation, let's remember True Mother's message of a heavenly unified Africa and world. Below is an excerpt from True Mother's speech at the World Africa Summit on January 18, 2018.

Africa will become the light of the world. Africa is the blessed continent, the shining light. And today with the heart of a True Mother I have come to pray and eradicate the historical pain that this continent has suffered, and begin a new history...

This is the continent that will become a new heavenly Africa that will attend God. Africa is the birthplace of humanity ... Centering on this continent and nation, I would like to begin an era centering on altruism, living for the sake of others, an era of peace, equality, happiness – the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.



Let's work together to realize this ideal ... I believe Africa can accomplish this, and that is why Africa is the first continent in the world. Africa has the potential to become the original, healthy Kingdom of God and the environment that God wanted to see.

You can learn more about True Mother's trip to Gorée Island in her memoir available [here](#).

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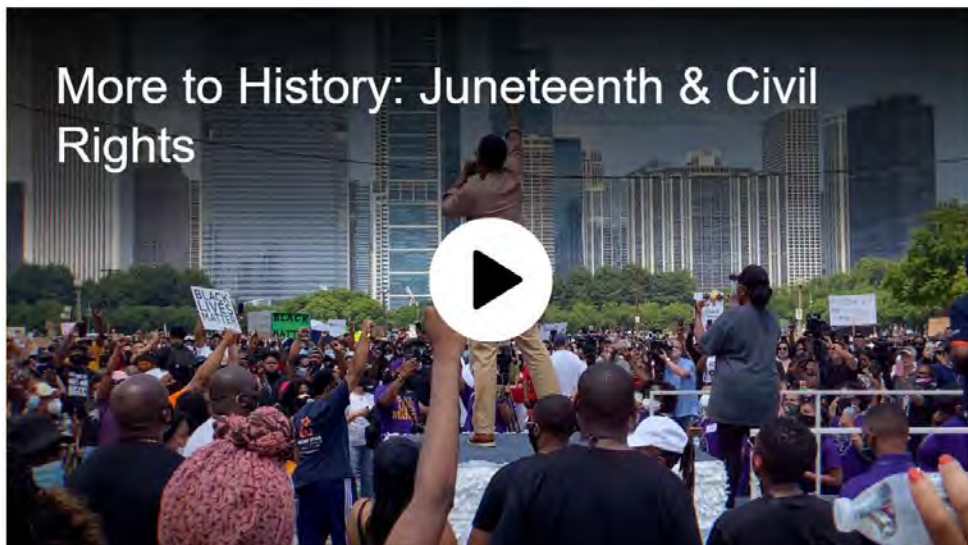
What Is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth commemorates an effective end of slavery in the United States.

BY: ELIZABETH NIX**UPDATED: JUNE 12, 2023** | ORIGINAL: JUNE 19, 2015 [copy page link](#) [PRINT PAGE](#)

Juneteenth (short for “June Nineteenth”) marks the day when federal troops arrived in [Galveston, Texas](#) in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops’ arrival came a full two and a half years after [the signing](#) of the [Emancipation Proclamation](#). Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday. On June 17, 2021, it [officially became a federal holiday](#). Juneteenth 2023 will occur on Monday, June 19.

More to History: Juneteenth & Civil Rights



Confederate General [Robert E. Lee](#) had surrendered at [Appomattox Court House](#) two months earlier in Virginia, but slavery had remained relatively unaffected in Texas—until U.S. General Gordon Granger stood on Texas soil and read General Orders No. 3: “The people of Texas are informed that, in

accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.”

The Emancipation Proclamation

The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President [Abraham Lincoln](#) on January 1, 1863, had established that all enslaved people in [Confederate states](#) in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”

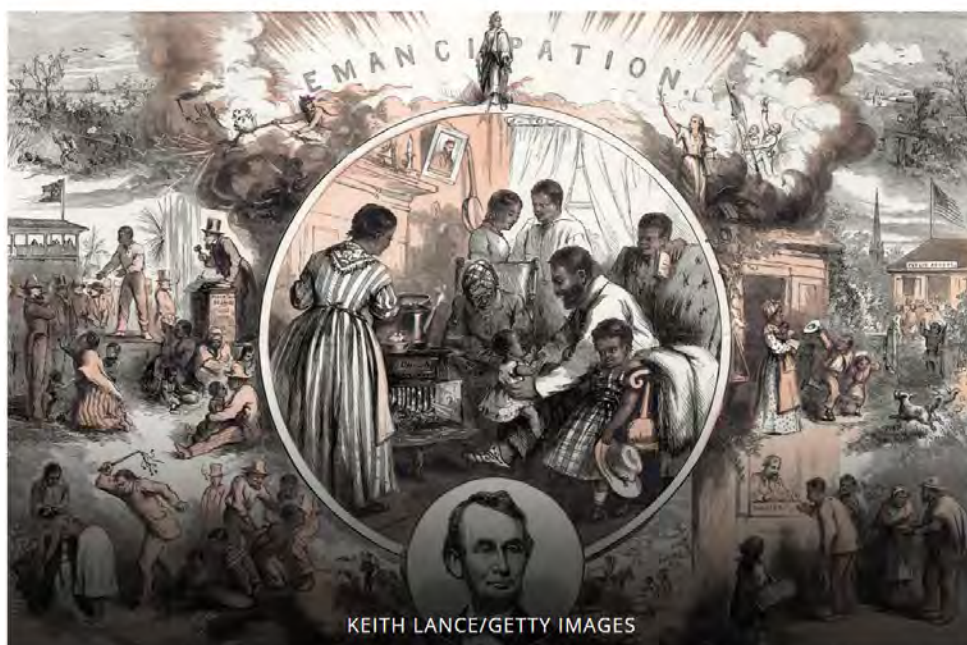


But in reality, the Emancipation Proclamation didn't instantly free any enslaved people. The proclamation only applied to places under Confederate control and not to slave-holding border states or rebel areas already under Union control. However, as Northern troops advanced into the Confederate South, many enslaved people fled behind Union lines.

Juneteenth and Slavery in Texas

In Texas, slavery had continued as the state experienced no large-scale fighting or significant presence of Union troops. Many enslavers from outside the Lone Star State had moved there, as they viewed it as a safe haven for slavery.

After the war came to a close in the spring of 1865, General Granger's arrival in Galveston that June signaled freedom for Texas's 250,000 enslaved people. Although emancipation didn't happen overnight for everyone—in some cases, enslavers withheld the information until after harvest season—celebrations broke out among newly freed Black people, and Juneteenth was born. That December, slavery in America was formally abolished with the adoption of the [13th Amendment](#).



ILLUSTRATED PRINT BY THOMAS NAST DEPICTING LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER EMANCIPATION.

The year following 1865, freedmen in Texas organized the first of what became the annual celebration of "Jubilee Day" on June 19. In the ensuing decades, Juneteenth commemorations featured music, barbecues, prayer services and other activities, and as Black people migrated from Texas to other parts of the country the Juneteenth tradition spread.

In 1979, [Texas became the first state](#) to make Juneteenth an official holiday; several others followed suit over the years. In June 2021, Congress passed a resolution establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday; President Biden signed it into law on June 17, 2021.



Juneteenth marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The Emancipation Proclamation had been signed two and a half years earlier, as depicted in this illustration. The Juneteenth holiday honors the effective end of slavery in the United States.

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