

JUNE NEWSLETTER



Celebration of Resilience

JUNETEENTH

FREEDOM DAY

June 19, 1865



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The Orgins of Juneteenth

General Order 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.

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.

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Major-General Commanding,
[Official.]
HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF TEXAS,
GALVESTON TEXAS, JUNE 19, 1865.)
General Order, No. 3.
The people 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 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. By order of Major-General GRANGER.
(Signed,) F. W. EMEY, Maj. & A. A. G.
[Official.]
HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF TEXAS,
GALVESTON, TEXAS, JUNE 19, 1865.)
General Order, No. 4.
All acts of the Governor and Legislature of Texas since the Ordinance of Secession I hereby declare illegitimate—all civil and military officers and agents of the so-called Confederate States or of the State of Texas, and all persons formerly connected with the Confederate States army in Texas, will at once report for parole at the following places, or such as may be designated hereafter to the proper U. S. officers to be appointed:

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When Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger issued the above order, he had no idea that, in establishing the Union Army's authority over the people of Texas, he was also establishing the basis for a holiday, "**Juneteenth**" ("*June*" plus "*nineteenth*"), today the most popular annual celebration of emancipation from slavery in the United States. After all, by the time Granger assumed command of the Department of Texas, the Confederate capital in Richmond had fallen; the "Executive" to whom he referred, President Lincoln, was dead; and the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery was well on its way to ratification.

The reactions to this profound news ranged from pure shock to immediate jubilation. While many lingered to learn of this new employer to employee relationship, many left before these offers were completely off the lips of their former 'masters' – attesting to the varying conditions on the plantations and the realization of freedom. Even with nowhere to go, many felt that leaving the plantation would be their first grasp of freedom. North was a logical destination and for many it represented true freedom, while the desire to reach family members in neighboring states drove some into Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Settling into these new areas as free men and women brought on new realities and the challenges of establishing a heretofore non-existent status for black people in America.

Recounting the memories of that great day in June of 1865 and its festivities would serve as motivation as well as a release from the growing pressures encountered in their new territories. The celebration of June 19th was coined "Juneteenth" and grew with more participation from descendants. The Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring each other, for praying and for gathering remaining family members. Juneteenth continued to be highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date.

JUNETEENTH FLAG



Created by activist and organizer Ben Haith, also known as Boston Ben, founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation (NJCF).

The Juneteenth flag symbolizes freedom and justice for Black Americans and African Americans. The colors are similar to the United States flag because all Americans are able to understand and recognize the importance of African American history.

One can not separate African American history from America's history and the flag reminds us of just that.

Why are the colors blue and red?

The colors of the flag were deliberately chosen by Haith and the collaborators to showcase that African Americans were always American even throughout enslavement.

The Black community is one with America. The colors chosen furthers the notion that America must ensure that all citizens have access to 'liberty and justice for all'.

What do the star and arc represent?

The most noticeable feature of the flag is its star and arc. The star is another callback to the United States flag – representing that Black people are free in all 50th states. The Emancipation Proclamation was first to read and acknowledged it in Galveston, Texas. Texas, also known as the Lone Star State played a significant role in the addition of the star.

Although Texas was the state that the documentation was read in, it represents freedom across the nation.

Alongside the star, the outlined burst and arc represent the new horizon and new opportunities that are to come for Black people.

TRADITIONAL FOODS

Red Foods

Red foods like soda, punch, hibiscus tea, red velvet cake, red beans and rice, hot sauce, fruits (strawberry, watermelon) are the most prominent feature on the Juneteenth menu.



The historical importance of red food traces back to the times of enslavement. Because many of the more common foods of the day were white, green, or brown, there was an excitement that came with the rarity of eating red-colored treats.

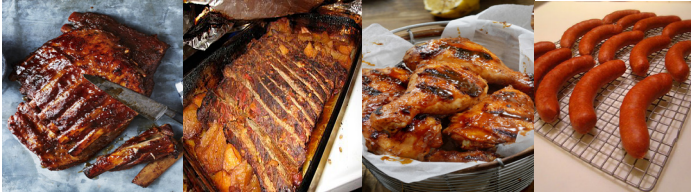
But what made the color even more significant was Texas's status as one of the last states to participate in the American slave trade. Many Africans came through Galveston, an island city on the Gulf Coast of the state, which also happens to be the birthplace of Juneteenth. Texas was at the end of the world to the Antebellum South.

There were a lot of enslaved Africans who were coming to Texas from the continent and through the Caribbean. The color red is highly associated with the cultures that would've come through the later years of the trade, which would have been Yoruba and Kongo

Both people—the Yoruba of Nigeria, Benin, and Togo; and the Kongo of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, and Gabon—placed great philosophical and spiritual value in the color red. For them the hue took on many meanings, it could symbolize sacrifice, transition, and power.



Traditional meats includes barbecue pork, chicken, ribs, hot links (encased sausage) and brisket. These meats are also considered a red food “another important” feature on the Juneteenth table.



Prosperity meal side dishes include corn, cornbread, collard greens, cabbage, black-eyed peas, pork, potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes.



Prosperity meals are a must, these are the same typical side dishes served on New Year’s Eve. Black-eyed peas and pork represent wealth, collard greens (or any leafy vegetables) are said to bring good fortune, and corn symbolizes gold.

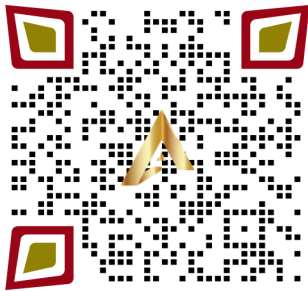
Although it is not a prosperity meal, potato salad is generally seen as non-negotiable at any decent barbecue gathering. These sides offer historical context as the foods were easy crops for the enslaved to harvest, store over the winter and prepare at meal times.

The foods of Emancipation Day are a huge (and delicious) part of honoring the holiday. As we continue to evolve as a people, healthier vegan and vegetarian alternatives are also being added to the table. This includes, fried fish, crab boils, season shrimp, vegan ribs and vegan macaroni and cheese.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Every year we must remind successive generations that this event triggered a series of events that one by one defines the challenges and responsibilities of successive generations. That’s why we need this holiday”

- Al Edwards



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