

# PROCLAMATION

## JUNETEENTH Annually on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June

**WHEREAS**, on June 19, 1865 Union Major General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the American Civil War had ended two and a half years prior with the signing of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 and that the enslaved are now free; and

**WHEREAS**, Texas was the last state to accept an "equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer"; and

**WHEREAS**, many former slaves left the plantations of Texas to embrace freedom and seek out family in Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma; and

**WHEREAS**, 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 for President Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson overturned the order that had provided 40,000 freed men with 400,000 acres of land entitled to them and provided it to the very planters that had declared war on the United States years prior; and

**WHEREAS**, recounting the memories of that great day in June of 1865 would serve as motivation as well as a release from the growing pressures encountered in their new territory; and

**WHEREAS**, the celebration of June 19<sup>th</sup> was coined "Juneteenth" as a celebration for reassuring each other, for praying, for recounting the past, and for some an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston for that date; and

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth today, celebrates Black freedom and achievement; as it takes on a more national, symbolic, and even global perspective, the events of 1865 in Texas are not forgotten, for all roots tie back to that fertile soil from which a national day of pride is growing; and

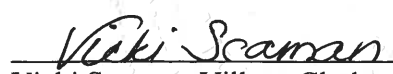
**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Village of Oak Park supports the celebration of Juneteenth both financially and in spirit from this day forward, respect and appreciation for all our differences grow out of exposure and working together; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Anan Abu-Taleb, President of the Village of Oak Park and Board of Trustees, do hereby proclaim that the Village of Oak Park shall recognize June 19, 2020 and each year thereafter on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June as Juneteenth.

**ADOPTED and APPROVED** this 15<sup>th</sup> day of June 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President Anan Abu-Taleb

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vicki Scaman, Village Clerk

**Al Edwards  
state representative  
district 146**



I had the honor and privilege of successfully sponsoring House Bill 1016 in the 66th Texas Legislature which made Emancipation Day "Juneteenth" an official state holiday.

This accomplishment was not without difficulties. Some pseudo — sophisticates asserted that I had ignorantly chosen the wrong day. Other critics charged that the whole effort was trivial — it would neither alleviate the suffering of the poor nor ameliorate the effects of racism; indeed, that it would perpetuate cliches about red soda water and watermelons.

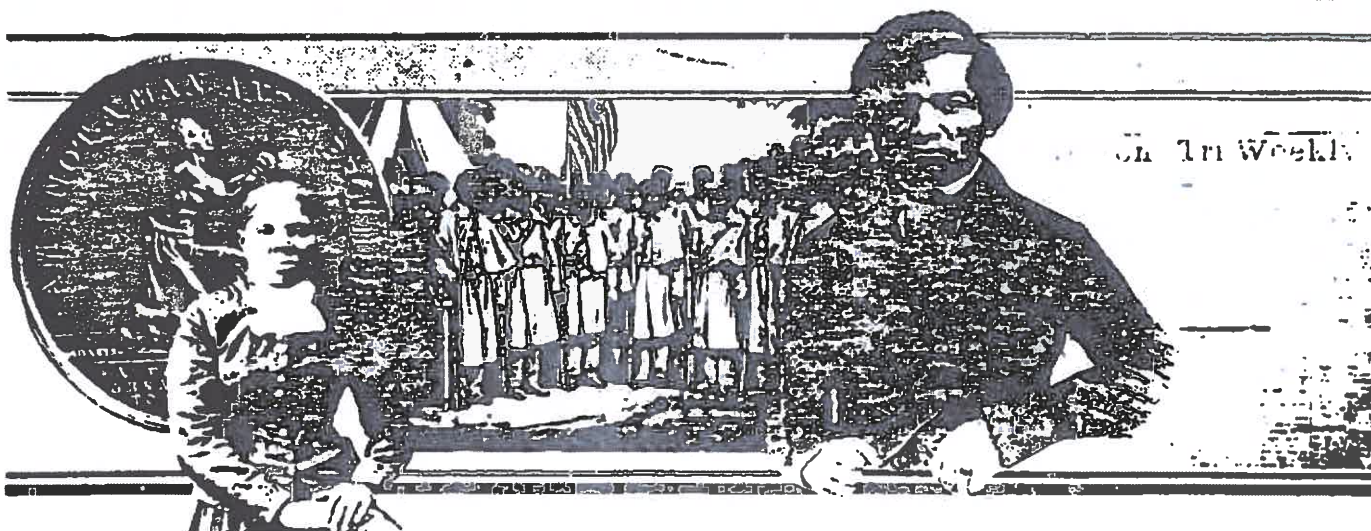
June 19, 1865 was, of course, the day slavery ended in Texas and for that reason its anniversary has always been celebrated not only in Texas but also in bordering areas of Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

The official recognition of Emancipation Day is a significant step forward. It is a symbol and symbols are important. What are the cross and the flag but symbols. I believe the Biblical injunction that "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." I feel that for a state which not too long ago celebrated Jefferson Davis' Birthday, now to celebrate the end of slavery means that many have now seen the light of someone's candle. This is a holiday not just for Black Texans but for all Texans. This is a day to take pride in our culture and history.

Freedom is worth celebrating and I am pleased that we in Texas have been celebrating it for 115 years. I am proud that the celebration is now official and that I had a part in making it so.

*Al Edwards*

State Representative Al Edwards  
June 1, 1980



## The New JUNETEENTH

Freedom is a cherished word to all humanity, particularly to those in bondage. On January 1, 1863, as church bells extolled the news that President Lincoln had issued his promised Emancipation Proclamation, slaves and sympathizers in Boston, Washington, Richmond, New York, and other cities danced in the streets, sang praises unto God, and cried tears of joy.

Although General Robert E. Lee surrendered his confederate army on April 9, 1865, the Trans - Mississippi Department States, under the leadership of Texas generals and officials had already set into motion schemes for prolonging the war in the Southwest. Federal forces smothered their efforts and General Kirby Smith surrendered the Confederate holdouts at Galveston Bay on June 2, 1863.

Thirty months after President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, General Gordon Granger, who had been placed in command of the Federal occupation troops, arrived at Galveston Bay, June 19, 1865. He issued GENERAL ORDER NO. 3 -EMANCIPATION. This was the birth of Juneteenth in Texas.

Juneteenth Celebrations were held informally for 114 years. In 1978 State Representative Al Edwards of Houston, Texas envisioned that blacks could have a formal celebration of emancipation from slavery. During his first year as a legislator he authored the most meaningful piece of legislation for the black community that had ever existed in the history of Texas or any other state. He wrote and lobbied to get passed into law the bill making June 19th a legal state holiday, the first official black holiday in the United States. After numerous setbacks and hard work Rep. Edwards pushed the bill through successful votes of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate within the last twenty-four hours of Texas' 66th Legislative Session. At a memorable and historical ceremony on the grounds of Texas' State Capitol in Austin, Texas, hundreds of supporters witnessed the bill's being signed into law by Governor William P. Clements on June 13, 1979. As a result of Rep. Edwards' efforts, Texans now witness the "NEW CELEBRATION OF JUNETEENTH," an Official State Holiday.

**JUNETEENTH U.S.A.**

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