

Do you know what Juneteenth is all about?

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Sherene Facey and William Archbold cross the Bridge of Peace together at the Reconciliation Ceremony in Las Vegas in June 2019

On Friday, June 19, 2020, millions of Americans around the nation will be celebrating Juneteenth, the holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. It has been called America's second Independence Day, and it honors African American freedom and achievement with educational and cultural events, as well as family gatherings. Juneteenth has grown tremendously in recent decades and as of today it has been recognized as a state holiday or special day of observance in 47 of the US states and the District of Columbia. Why was this date chosen?

While the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln came into effect on January 1, 1863, it took about two and a half years until it was enforced in Texas, the last of the remote slave states. On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger and his Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas and proclaimed that all slaves were free, and thereafter, this day was celebrated each year in Texas, and it gradually spread to other parts of the country.

The National Juneteenth Observance Foundation, which aims to have Juneteenth recognized as a national holiday of reconciliation and healing, holds annual events around the country, and in 2019 the Las Vegas WFWP chapter contributed to the program there with a Bridge of Peace Reconciliation Ceremony.

We invite you to take the time to [read more](#) about the significance and the history of this holiday and also to see if there are any local or virtual events in your area that you may be able to attend this year.