



The National Center on Violence Against  
Women in the Black Community

## UJIMA CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth is the celebration of when many enslaved Blacks received word that they had been freed. Ujima strives to help our community break the figurative (and at times literal) shackles that bind and lead to multiple forms of bondage; ultimately robbing them of their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We work to end multiple forms of violence in the Black community, including domestic, sexual and community violence, which inevitably prevent Black women, men and children from living in true freedom.

### ABOUT JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. **On June 19, 1865**, led by Major General Gordon Granger, Union soldiers arrived to Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and slaves were now free. Note, this was *two and half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*—which became official on **January 1, 1863**.

### SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

**December 31, 1862** - "FREEDOM EVE"  
The first Watch Night services took place. Enslaved and free Blacks gathered in churches and private homes across the country awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect.

**January 1, 1863** - At midnight, all enslaved Blacks in the Confederate States were declared legally free.

**Everyone was not immediately free.**  
Even though the Emancipation Proclamation was made effective in **1863**, it could not be implemented in places still under Confederate control.

On **June 19, 1865**, about 2,000 Union soldiers arrived to Galveston, Texas to deliver the news to more than 250,000 enslaved Blacks that they were free by executive decree.

### PIONEERS OF JUNETEENTH

**Black Union Soldiers** - By the end of the Civil War, roughly 179,000 Black men (10% of the Union Army) served as soldiers in the U.S. Army and another 19,000 served in the Navy. There were nearly 80 Black commissioned officers.

**Major General Gordon Granger** (1822-1876) - In 1863, he led Union soldiers into Galveston, Texas to announce the end of slavery.

**Frederick Douglass** (1818?\*-1895) - Assisted with the recruitment of Black men for the Union Army. He encouraged Black men to become soldiers to ensure eventual full citizenship.

**Harriet Tubman** (1820?\*-1913) - Black women could not formally join the Army; however, they served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman, who scouted for the South Carolina Volunteers.

\*Historical inaccuracies with date of birth due to limited or no record of birth.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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References: Juneteenth.com | National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, DC | National Archives, Washington, DC