

JUNETEENTH

JUNETEENTH (JUNE 19), IS A RECOGNIZED HOLIDAY TO CELEBRATE WHAT IS A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN AMERICAN HISTORY: THE EFFECTIVE END OF SLAVERY. THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION WAS SIGNED BY PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON JANUARY 1, 1863. MORE THAN TWO YEARS LATER (JUNE 19, 1865), FEDERAL TROOPS FINALLY MADE IT TO GALVESTON, TEXAS TO ENFORCE THE ORDER AND ENSURE THAT MORE THAN 250,000 ENSLAVED PEOPLE IN THE STATE WERE FREED.

THE DAY BECAME A POWERFUL SYMBOL OF FREEDOM AND A VITAL STEP IN THE PATH TOWARD EQUALITY FOR ALL. IT WAS FIRST CELEBRATED IN TEXAS IN 1866 TO COMMEMORATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVENT. IT GRADUALLY GREW, SPREADING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. PEOPLE CELEBRATE WITH COMMUNITY GATHERINGS, FOOD, PRAYER, EDUCATIONAL EVENTS, AND FAMILY CELEBRATIONS.

IN 2021, JUNETEENTH WAS OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED A FEDERAL HOLIDAY, ACKNOWLEDGING ITS SIGNIFICANCE ON A NATIONAL LEVEL. FOR MANY, THE DAY IS BOTH A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE, AND A TIME TO LOOK BACK WITH PRIDE ON THE STRIDES OUR COUNTRY HAS MADE TOWARDS EQUALITY.

ACROSS THE NATION, AS WE OBSERVE JUNETEENTH, IT PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NATION'S HISTORY AND TO REMEMBER THE SHARED VALUES OF DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND UNITY AS ONE COUNTRY. WHETHER THROUGH ATTENDING LOCAL EVENTS OR SIMPLY TAKING THE TIME TO LISTEN AND LEARN, OBSERVING JUNETEENTH CAN BE A MEANINGFUL WAY TO HONOR THE PAST WHILE CONTRIBUTING TO A UNITED FUTURE.

F R E E D O M D A Y



OEO
OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

