



# PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, an excerpt from the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863 states:

*And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.*

*And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.*

*And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.*

*And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.*

**WHEREAS**, an excerpt from the statement from Union Major General Gordon Granger declared in Galveston, Texas an end to slavery on June 19, 1865 and which serves as the origin for Juneteenth:

*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.*

**WHEREAS**, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on December 6, 1865 and provides that:

*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*

**WHEREAS**, this simple, but profound, statement by General Granger became a celebration, first in Galveston, then across the state of Texas, then throughout the South, picking up local traditions and music along the way, like this excerpt from Lift Every Voice and Sing, first premiering in 1900:

*Lift every voice and sing,  
'Til earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on 'til victory is won.*

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth spread to the rest of America through the Great Migrations north and west between 1910 and 1970; and

**WHEREAS**, Texas became the 1<sup>st</sup> state to designate Juneteenth as a state holiday in 1980; and

**WHEREAS**, 45 states recognized Juneteenth by 2016, and in 2021, it became an official federal holiday, and in 2022, thanks to the proposal brought forward by Williamson County Commissioner Cynthia Long, the Commissioners Court approved adding Juneteenth to its list of official holidays;

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Williamson County Commissioners Court does hereby proclaim

June 19, 2024

As

Juneteenth, AKA Emancipation Day, in Williamson County

And

Ask our residents to celebrate this most Texan of holidays by continuing along the long path of the moral universe as it arcs towards justice.

Passed by Commissioners Court and Signed on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bill Gravell, County Judge

On behalf of the Williamson County Commissioners Court Members