Juneteenth

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Have you heard of a holiday called Juneteenth? It is an important holiday in the United States that traces its roots to slavery. Its name is a combination of the month and day of its celebration, June (nineteenth). It celebrates the end of chattel slavery in the United States.

The history of the Juneteenth holiday began during the Civil War. On June 19, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Act to secure Freedom to all Persons within the Territories of the United States. This act banned slavery in the Union (except as the punishment for a crime). Slavery was still widespread and protected within the Confederacy. On September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. The Proclamation declared freedom to all enslaved people within the Confederacy. The Proclamation would take effect on January 1, 1863. This new law applied to Union-controlled areas within the South. Enslaved people attempting to escape slavery without Union protection were not safe. They were often captured and returned to their enslaver(s).

The abolition of slavery was also a significant event in North Carolina. The first Juneteenth celebrations occurred in North Carolina in 1866. The first official Juneteenth celebrations in North Carolina were hosted in Charlotte on June 19, 1917.

As a former slave state, Juneteenth is also an important holiday in North Carolina. The state offers a few different celebrations and reflections of the holiday. The first official Juneteenth celebrations in North Carolina were hosted in Charlotte on June 19, 1917. In 1917, the state established Juneteenth as a state holiday. Juneteenth is also celebrated in other parts of the United States. The holiday is observed in various ways, depending on the cultural and historical context.

Another important cultural artifact of Juneteenth is the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Mural. The mural was created by Chatham County’s Community Remembrance Coalition with the help of artist David Wilson. The site of the mural is George Moses Horton School in Pittsboro, North Carolina. The mural was created in 2015 in honor of Juneteenth.

As of 2023, Juneteenth is widely celebrated throughout North Carolina. A significant celebration was held in Pittsboro on June 19, 2023. The community of Pittsboro gathered to remember Black history and culture with the unveiling of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Mural. This mural was created by Chatham County’s Community Remembrance Coalition with the help of artist David Wilson. The site of the mural is George Moses Horton School in Pittsboro, North Carolina. It is known as the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Mural.

Glossary:
1. Chattel slavery: the system of slavery that existed in the United States. It allowed people to be bought, sold, and traded as property.
2. Union: During the Civil War, the (mostly) northern states in the United States that did not secede.
3. Confederacy: During the Civil War, the southern states in the United States that did not secede.
4. Emancipation Proclamation: A government order that declared freedom to all enslaved people within the Confederacy.
5. Freedom’s Bureaus: Created during the Civil War to assist free people in making the transition out of slavery.

Guided Reading Questions:
1. Which Amendment to the Constitution banned chattel slavery?
2. What Texas city is considered the birthplace of Juneteenth?
3. Name one food or drink that is commonly served on Juneteenth.
4. Which North Carolina business owner created the Juneteenth Festival for Carolinas?
5. Where is David Wilson’s Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Mural located?

References:

People:

Papa S. N'Diaye
from WFAE 90.7

Gordon Granger
from Texas State Historical Association

Larry Womble
from Winston-Salem State University

Places:

Galveston, Texas
from VisitGalveston.com

Pittsboro, NC
from Chapelboro.com

Charlotte, NC
from Foundation for the Carolinas

Watch and Listen:

Juneteenth Discussion with Kelly Navies
from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

What is Juneteenth and Why is it Important?
from TedEd
Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom Documentary
from PBS

For Teachers:

Juneteenth Toolkit
from the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission

Juneteenth Digital Toolkit
from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Lesson Plan (Grades 6-12): History of Juneteenth and Why it Became a National Holiday
from PBS

Lesson Plan (Grades 3-5): Juneteenth
from Learning for Justice

Related Topics:

Juneteenth: Fact Sheet
from Congressional Research Service

The Long History of Our New Federal Holiday: Juneteenth
from the U.S. Capitol Historical Society

The Thirteenth Amendment in North Carolina

Primary Sources:

Commemorative Print of the Emancipation Proclamation, 1864
from the National Museum of American History

General Order No. 3
from the National Archives
House Bill 1607: Juneteenth as Freedom Day

from the North Carolina General Assembly

Artifacts:

Haith’s Juneteenth flag. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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