

Did You Know?

On June 17th of last year, President Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, establishing Juneteenth (June 19th) as a federal holiday. Although Juneteenth has been celebrated since 1866, its designation as a federal holiday has increased its national prominence. ***IntegrITS will observe Juneteenth on Monday, June 20,*** and we thought it might be helpful to highlight America's newest federal holiday in this month's edition of our "Did You Know?" series.

What is Juneteenth?

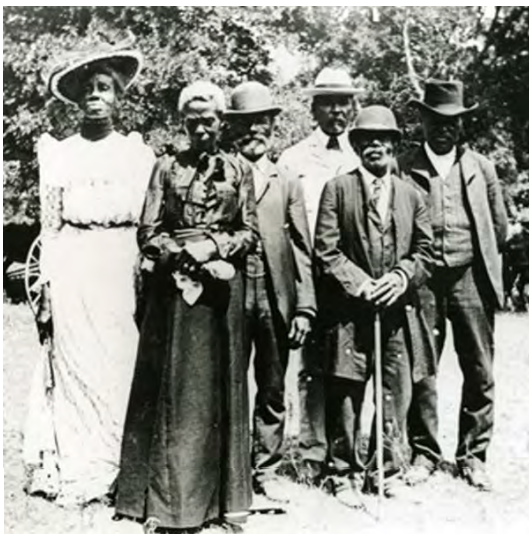
"Of all Emancipation Day observances, Juneteenth falls closest to the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, when the sun, at its zenith, defies the darkness in every state, including those once shadowed by slavery." -Henry Louis Gates, Jr

On June 19, 1865, Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, TX and established the Union Army's authority over Texas while also issuing an order that all enslaved people be freed in accordance with The Emancipation Proclamation. Two and a half years after President Lincoln made The Emancipation Proclamation—and two months after the end of the Civil War—freedom for enslaved people finally made it to Texas.

In reality, emancipation still didn't reach the entirety of Texas' 250,000 enslaved men, women, and children. In many cases, notifying enslaved people of their freedom was up to reluctant masters or government agents who were slow to arrive. Furthermore, "It was a perilous time for Black people, and some former slaves who were freed or attempted to get free were attacked and killed" ([NPR](#)).

Despite the hardships and violence, freed men and women in Texas rallied around the date, June 19th. They established Juneteenth in 1866, a year after Maj. Gen. Granger first arrived in Texas and proclaimed enslaved people be freed.

How is Juneteenth Celebrated?



Early celebrations were marked by formerly enslaved people and their descendants traveling to Galveston in honor of Juneteenth.

Photo credit: Texas Juneteenth Day Celebration, 1900 (Austin History Center, Austin Public Library)

In many places, Black people were barred from celebrating in public spaces. "In one such case, Black community leaders in Houston saved \$1,000 to purchase land in 1872 that would be devoted specifically to Juneteenth celebrations, according to the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. That land became Emancipation Park, a name that it still bears" ([NPR](#)).



Juneteenth Celebration in Emancipation Park
(photo courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#))

As Juneteenth celebrations expanded beyond Texas, so have the ways people honor the holiday. You will typically find people celebrating "...through readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, religious sermons and spirituals, the preservation of slave food delicacies (always at the center: the almighty barbecue pit), as well as the incorporation of new games and traditions, from baseball to rodeos and, later, stock car races and overhead flights" ([PBS](#)). Music has also been at the forefront of Juneteenth celebrations.



Juneteenth Parade in Philadelphia, PA (photo courtesy of [Shutterstock](#))

For those of you reading this in time to join, NAVWAR is hosting a virtual Juneteenth Observance event today, June 9th, at 10am PDT. If you are interested in joining, details can be found [here](#).

We hope what we've shared has expanded your knowledge of the history and importance of our Nation's newest federal holiday. May you and your families enjoy celebrating freedom for all on Juneteenth!

Tip of the Week

Need ideas for your Juneteenth meal? Nicole Taylor, author of [Watermelon and Red Birds](#) (a cookbook celebrating Juneteenth), has curated a list of 45 recipes she recommends for your Juneteenth celebrations. You can access this list by clicking [here](#) (you may be prompted to sign up for a free New York Times account).

Coming Soon: *Team Spotlight*

Join us next week as we spotlight another one of our incredible IntegrITS teams!

Comments/Questions?

If you have any comments or questions about this week's newsletter, email us at news@integrits.com.

We have also created a website where we are storing the archives of all our newsletters to date: <https://integrits.com/digest-archives/>.

Have an incredible week, and we'll see you next Thursday!

Warmest Regards,
The IntegrITS Weekly Digest

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