

# Cultural News

Volume 16, Issue 6  
June 2018

## The History of Juneteenth Celebrations

Abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth worked tirelessly to free blacks from bondage in the United States. And when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, it appeared that the peculiar institution known as slavery had met its end. For many African Americans, life remained the same, however. That's because fierce racial discrimination prevented them from living autonomous lives.

More shockingly, some enslaved African Americans had no idea that President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which mandated that they be set free. In Texas, more than two-and-a-half years passed before slaves received their freedom. The holiday known as Juneteenth Independence Day honors these slaves as well as African-American heritage and the contributions blacks have made to the United States.

### History of Juneteenth

Juneteenth marks the date of June 19, 1865, when Gen. Gordon Granger of the Union Army arrived in Galveston, Texas, to demand that the slaves there be set free. Texas was one of the last states where slavery endured. Although President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, African Americans remained in bondage in the Lone Star State. When Gen. Granger arrived in Texas, he read General Order No. 3 to Galveston residents:

"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. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages."

Following Granger's announcement, the formerly enslaved African Americans broke into celebration.

Today that celebration, said to be the oldest black American holiday, is known as Juneteenth. African Americans not only celebrated their freedom, they exercised their new rights by buying land across Texas, namely Emancipation Park in Houston, Booker T. Washington Park in Mexia and Emancipation Park in Austin.

### Past and Present Juneteenth Celebrations

The first massive Juneteenth celebrations kicked off the year after Gen. Granger appeared in Galveston. Historic Juneteenth celebrations included religious services, readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, inspirational speakers, stories from former slaves and games and contests, including rodeo events. Many African Americans celebrated Juneteenth in the same way that Americans generally celebrate the Fourth of July.

Today, Juneteenth celebrations feature similar activities. As of 2012, 40 states and the District of Columbia recognize the Juneteenth holiday. Since 1980, the state of Texas has observed Juneteenth as an official holiday known as Emancipation Day. Contemporary celebrations of Juneteenth in Texas and elsewhere include parades and street fairs, dancing, picnics and cookouts, family reunions and historical reenactments. Moreover, President Barack Obama pointed out in his 2009 proclamation of the holiday that Juneteenth "also serves as a time for reflection and appreciation, and an opportunity for many people to trace their family's lineage."

While African Americans widely celebrate Juneteenth today, the popularity of the holiday has waned during certain periods, such as World War II. Holiday celebrations of Juneteenth resurrected in 1950, but by the last years of that decade and in the 1960s, Juneteenth celebrations declined once more. Juneteenth became a popular holiday again in a variety of regions during the 1970s. In the early 21st century, Juneteenth is not only a well celebrated holiday, there's a push to have the 19th of June become a National Day of Recognition for slavery.



### JUNE 2018 CALENDAR

BLACK MUSIC MONTH

NATIONAL CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

NATIONAL GLBT PRIDE MONTH

- 3-9- Pet Appreciate Week (US)
- 2- All Saints (Orthodox Christian)
- 5- World Environment Day (UN)
- 6- Atheists Pride Day (US)
- 8- Sacred Heart of Jesus (Catholic Christian)
- 9- St. Columba of Iona (Celtic Christian)
- 10-16- National Flag Week (US)
- 11-17- Men's Health Week (US)
- 15-17- Eid al Fitr Ramadan ends (Islam)
- 16- Guru Arjan Martyrdom (Sikh)
- 18-24- Universal Father's Week (US)
- 20- Waqf al Arafa- Hajj Day (Islam)
- 24-30- National Mosquito Awareness week (US)
- 30- Social Media Day (US)

## LGBT Pride Month 2018



Every summer in the United States, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and allies come together for a month-long celebration of love, diversity, acceptance and unashamed self-pride.

Here's everything you need to know about LGBT Pride Month.

### What is LGBT Pride Month?

The commemorative month is meant to recognize the sweeping impact that LGBT individuals, advocates and allies have on history in the U.S. and around the globe, according to the Library of Congress

### What is LGBT Pride Month?

LGBT Pride Month is celebrated every year in June, with a series of events and parades taking place across the nation.

### Why is it in June?

The month of June was chosen for LGBT Pride Month to commemorate the riots held by members of the LGBT community against a police raid

that took place at the Stonewall Inn in New York City on June 28, 1969.

The so-called Stonewall riots were a "tipping point" for the gay liberation movement in the United States, according to the Library of Congress. The uproar also paved the way for the modern fight for LGBT rights.

Previous presidents of the United States have, on several occasions, officially declared June as LGBT Pride Month.

### How do people celebrate LGBT Pride Month?

LGBT Pride Month events draw millions of participants from around the world each year. Today, the month-long celebrations include pride parades, marches, parties, concerts, workshops and symposiums across the nation.

Memorials are also often held for members of the LGBT community who have lost their lives to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS.

The rainbow LGBT flag is prominently displayed throughout the month. Gilbert Baker, an American artist, gay rights activist and U.S. Army veteran, created the flag in 1978 as a new symbol for the gay and lesbian political movement, at the suggestion of his friends and colleagues, including Harvey Milk, a San Francisco city supervisor and the first openly gay elected official in California. Milk was assassinated later that year.

According to Baker's website, the colors of the LGBT flag each have a meaning: red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, blue for harmony and violet for spirit.

Baker died at the age of 65 on March 31, 2017, though his rainbow flag remains an iconic, powerful symbol for LGBT pride.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/lgbt-pride-month-2018-history-events-parades/story?id=55414438>

## New Staff Interpreter Profile: Munzer Abufarah

Munzer is the new MIS Arabic speaking interpreter of Palestinian ancestry. He was born in Zarqa, Jordan. To pursue his career path, he moved to Puerto Rico and lived there for about 10 years. During his stay, he obtained a Bachelor's degree in accounting from the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico. In addition to Arabic, Munzer speaks fluent Spanish and Portuguese. His journey did not end in Puerto Rico: in September 2016, he moved to Sacramento, California.

In Sacramento, Munzer found an interpreting job and utilizes his bilingual-language skills to help out the LEP community.

According to Munzer, his biggest accomplishment was starting a career here with UC Davis Health.

During Munzer's spare time, he enjoys going out for walks, especially in cold weather near a river or a lake. He enjoys taking road trips, eating out and trying out new foods and new restaurants.

We asked Munzer how does he feel about joining the UCDMC Medical Interpreting department? In his own words, "I'm loving it and definitely will take advantage of this great opportunity".

Welcome aboard, Munzer! We are happy to have you as part of the UC Davis Medical Center's Interpreting Team.

