

Brief History of Juneteenth

1862

- A preliminary announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation was given on September 22, 1862, which would free slaves in states that rebelled against the Union contingent on those states rejoining the union by January 1, 1863.

1863

- On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was officially announced which legally freed slaves in states that had seceded from the Union. However, many slave masters withheld this information from slaves and kept them captive. This legal freedom for slaves did not extend to the entire nation, but served as turning point in the Civil War.

1865

- May 29, 1865, Andrew Johnson announces a pardon to Black AND white participants in the rebellion. Former Confederate officers were excluded, but many would receive pardons from Johnson.

1865

- June 19, 1865, marks Juneteenth, which represents the date that Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Texas and announced the end of the Civil War, 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was announced.

1865

- In July of 1865, U.S. Army General, Oliver Otis Howard, director of the of the Freedmen's Bureau issued Circular Order #15 ordering Bureau agents to set aside 40-acre plots for the freedmen. Very quickly, President Andrew Johnson aborted the order and lands were restored to their former slave masters. The African American quest for equal rights and citizenship was blocked.

1865-1866

- The Southern Black Codes were passed in Southern States like Mississippi and South Carolina, requiring Blacks to pay prohibitive licensing fees to work in skilled artisan jobs.

1866

- The Ku Klux Klan was formed in Pulaski, Tennessee to control the Black population as a source of cheap labor and to prevent African American exercise of the vote and office holding.

1867

- The right of Black political participation commenced with the passage of the Reconstructions Act.

1870

- The ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 prompted Black elected officials in Southern states. One prime example is Hiram Revels of Mississippi, the first African American Senator.

1877

- Hayes-Tilden Compromise was an informal agreement where Southern Democrats agreed not to block Hayes' presidential election victory if the Republicans removed all federal troops from the south, making certain states Democratic and bringing an ending the Reconstruction era.

1879

- 1879 began the first migration of African Americans or 'Exodusters' out of the south. This migration created a few all-Black towns where Black people, because of segregation, were forced to do for self as much as they could, ostensibly leading to a few Black Wall Streets.

2020

- September 10, 2020, Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey signed legislation designating Juneteenth as a recognized State and public holiday taking place on the third Friday in June.