



Juneteenth marks the effective end of slavery in the United States. Two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) enslaved people were finally freed. The Emancipation Proclamation didn't instantly free all slaves. The Proclamation only applied to the places under Confederate control. Also, not to slave holding border states or rebel areas already under Union control. For this reason, it took a very long time for the enslaved people to actually be freed, Juneteenth (1865).

The Juneteenth holiday celebrates the resilience, solidarity, and culture of the African-American community. This holiday is named for the combination of "June" and "Nineteenth". Juneteenth is also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day. Approximately 250,000 African-American slaves learned that they were free. Once the enslaved people knew that they were free many of them went to find their family members. Some of the slaveowners were not too eager to part ways with what they considered as their property and as a result many of them were beaten and even killed. Although, Juneteenth is not a federal holiday it is considered the longest-running African-American holiday. The early Juneteenth celebrations included praying for each other, reassuring each other, and gathering remaining family members.

Some Juneteenth festivities include rodeos, barbecuing, fishing and baseball which provide entertainment to the many that continue the tradition today. Barbecuing was a way that Juneteenth participants could sit around the barbecue pit and share in spirit the happiness of their freedom. During today's celebrations the food is in abundance unlike in the beginning when they celebrated with whatever they had. A true Juneteenth celebration is also filled with rich conversation and dressing in adorning clothing (usually from former masters).

How can we celebrate today?

- Find an event in your community
- Host your own backyard party
- Cook some traditional foods
- Support Black-owned businesses
- Listen to Black artists
- Read books written by Black authors and poets
- Watch Black television shows and movies
- Visit an exhibit or museum dedicated to Black Culture

References

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Juneteenth>

<https://Juneteenth.com>

<https://www.history.com/news/what-is-Juneteenth>