

Name _____

Date _____



Juneteenth

1865, June 19th:

This is the day that the slaves became free.

Celebrating Juneteenth every June of the year,

Honoring the voice of those who aren't here.

(x2)

As we reflect upon a Civil War,

Slavery was the major issue that it was fought for.

And on January 1, 1863,

The Emancipation Proclamation said slaves were free.

And two years later, slavery was made illegal

When Congress passed the 13th Amendment, but the people

Of Galveston, Texas were the last to know.

We don't know the reason why the word traveled so slow.

It was June 19, 1865

When the Union troops finally arrived

To announce General Order Number 3,

Which was the official end of slavery.

Now former slaves, they had to choose.

What will be the next step? What will be the next move?

Some stayed on the same plantation,

Working out a deal to receive compensation.

Others traveled to states nearby

To find lost family members so they could reunite.

And still more headed north,

'Cause it represented the freedom that they had fought for.

And a year later, many former slaves returned

With their families to Galveston where they first learned
That slavery was finally outlawed in this nation,
And that was the first Juneteenth celebration.

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Now at first, former slaves and their families weren't allowed
To use public spaces, so they would bring a crowd
To people's backyards or to black churches.
But as conditions changed, they saved money to purchase
Their own land to celebrate and get loose on,
Like Emancipation Park in Houston.
It started in Texas, but it kept spreading faster.
Today, it's celebrated from Dallas to Alaska.
People play ball, sing, dance and fish.
Plus, there's barbecues so you should bring a special dish.
It's a time that you might sip a strawberry soda
Or sport some new clothes that make your family say, hold up.
1980, Juneteenth was declared
A state holiday in Texas, but it didn't stop there.
Today, it's a holiday in 45 states.
It's a time to reflect and a time to celebrate.

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