



PROCLAMATION

Juneteenth Independence Day

WHEREAS, news of the end of slavery did not reach frontier areas of the United States, in particular the state of Texas and other Southwestern states, until months after the conclusion of the Civil War and more than 2½ years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, isolated from both Union and Confederate forces during the Civil War, Texas had become a refuge for those who wished to continue the practice of holding human beings as property; and

WHEREAS, although the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on Jan. 1, 1863, 250,000 people still were held as human chattel in Texas when U.S. Army Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the Civil War had ended and enslaved people were free; and

WHEREAS, the following is the text of the official recorded version of the order:

"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. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere"; and

WHEREAS, African Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest celebrated June 19, commonly known as "Juneteenth Independence Day," as inspiration and encouragement for future generations; and

WHEREAS, Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth a state holiday and, by June 2020, 47 states and the District of Columbia have established full or partial recognition of the holiday; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States and celebrations have been held to honor African American freedom; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census discloses that the population of North Carolina in 1860 was 992,622, of which 331,059 were enslaved, including 5,108 slaves living in Orange County on plantations such as the Cameron Plantation in Hillsborough; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed and President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act on June 17, 2021 to designate Juneteenth as a nationally recognized federal holiday; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth has been declared a paid holiday by the governing bodies of Orange County, the Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Hillsborough, the Orange County School District and the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School District; and

WHEREAS, slavery was not officially abolished until ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution by the required 27 of the then 36 states on Dec. 6, 1865, and the abolishment of slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime, was proclaimed on Dec. 18, 1865; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Hillsborough recognizes that while the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment may have officially ended the legal practice of enslaving human beings in the United States of America, 158 years later, there is still progress which must be made to dismantle the insidious systems and practices of white supremacy and systemic racism, the foundations of which were laid by the enslavement of Black people;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jenn Weaver, mayor of the Town of Hillsborough, do hereby proclaim that Hillsborough honors the perseverance and hope that inspired African Americans to celebrate freedom, to look for lost relatives, and to thrive in a hostile and white supremacist environment and that Hillsborough recognizes Juneteenth as an important date in American history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this seal of the Town of Hillsborough to be affixed this 12th day of June in the year 2023.

Jenn Weaver, Mayor
Town of Hillsborough