



CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH 2020

June 19 is celebrated as Juneteenth in the U.S. and many other countries as well. Historically, Juneteenth commemorates a defining moment in American history: the June 19, 1865, conveying of the news of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery by Union soldiers in Texas, where the news had been slow to arrive. Juneteenth is thus a joyous holiday, celebrated among friends and family with song, dance, story-telling, food, and prayer. But the holiday commemorates and celebrates timeless truths as well as the historic moment. It reflects the universal dreams of freedom and community. It celebrates the resilience and steadfastness of the human spirit, and the achievements and contributions of African-Americans to this country. And it carries the reminder that this country has not yet fully accounted for and repaired the harms done to African-Americans. It is especially meaningful to celebrate Juneteenth now, even as we mourn and organize after the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Brionna Taylor, and so many others.

The poem “We Rose,” by Kristina Kay, has been called one of the “official poems” of Juneteenth:

We Rose

*From Africa’s heart, we rose
Already a people, our faces ebon, our bodies lean,
We rose
Skills of art, life, beauty and family
Crushed by forces we knew nothing of, we rose
Survive we must, we did,
We rose
We rose to be you, we rose to be me,
Above everything expected, we rose
To become the knowledge we never knew,
We rose
Dream, we did
Act we must*

Here is just a sampling of the many virtual Juneteenth celebrations planned around the country:

- Live-streamed Juneteenth music festival:
<https://www.nbcdfw.com/about-nbc-5/community/the-juneteenth-live-streaming-music-festival/2387816/>
- Ten songs for Juneteenth celebration
<http://blackyouthproject.com/10-songs-for-your-juneteenth-celebration/>
- Virtual Juneteenth music festival:
<https://washparkprofile.com/stories/virtual-juneteenth-music-festival-will-be-celebration-of-freedom,302322>
- Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire Juneteenth 2020 celebration:
<https://blackheritagetrailnh.org/2020-juneteenth-celebration-food-for-the-body-food-for-the-soul/>

To learn more about Juneteenth, here are a few of many resources:

- National Registry of Juneteenth organizations:
<https://www.juneteenth.com/aboutjuneteenth.htm>
- National Museum of African-American History, Celebrating Juneteenth
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/celebrating-juneteenth>
- National Museum of African-American History:
<https://nmaahc.tumblr.com/post/121925744985/the-historical-legacy-of-juneteenth>
- The Wright Museum of African-American history: <https://www.thewright.org/juneteenth>
- Henry Louis Gates, Jr. on Juneteenth:
<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-is-juneteenth/>.

Wishing you a happy, meaningful Juneteenth!