

June 17, 2022
President Cropper

Welcome

Welcome everyone. Welcome to our Juneteenth Celebration.

We are taking time today to observe Juneteenth. One year ago today, President Biden signed legislation into law making Juneteenth a federal holiday. As a result, our nation will officially observe Juneteenth on Monday. Juneteenth has been celebrated in Vallejo for many years and today we are proud to join in that celebration.

So, what are we celebrating? We are celebrating the end of chattel slavery in the United States in 1865. It ended amidst a Civil War in which over 360,000 Union soldiers gave their last full measure. Two-and-a-half years after the Emancipation Proclamation, it took more federal soldiers to enforce it. They went into the far reaches of the Confederacy, in this case marched into Galveston to enforce the emancipation of slaves. On the morning of June 19, 1865, [Union](#) Major General [Gordon Granger](#) issued General Order No. 3, finally freeing the last slaves in the Confederacy.

While we celebrate this momentous day, we must also acknowledge the impacts that the cruel, horrible and utterly debasing practice of slavery wrought on African-Americans. The toll has been heavy, and the journey to freedom has been uphill all the way -- at times treacherous -- even deadly. So today, I ask you to reflect on that struggle for freedom, that struggle for equal rights, that struggle for the franchise.

I returned yesterday from the CSU Juneteenth Symposium, where I, like the hundreds in the audience with me, was confronted with a sobering observation: While our fellow Americans are no longer shackled in chains, many of them have been shackled, simply, by the way they have been

Many of our fellow Americans cannot see a path forward to true freedom in a society that creates

