

Emancipation Proclamation - Scott # 1233
Issued on Aug 16, 1963 in Chicago, Illinois - Designed by George Olden



The *Emancipation Proclamation* was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The document declared that slaves of the Confederate states in rebellion against the Union were free. It did not actually free any slaves; Lincoln had no way of enforcing the proclamation in those states in rebellion. (See the *13th Amendment*)

Many of the slaves in Texas did not learn of their freedom until 1865.

Before the start of the Civil War, northern leaders had been primarily concerned with stopping the extension of slavery into western territories that would eventually achieve statehood within the Union. With the secession of the Southern states and the consequent start of the Civil War, however, the continued tolerance of Southern slavery by Northerners no longer served any constructive political purpose. **Emancipation** thus quickly changed from a distant possibility to an imminent and feasible eventuality. Lincoln had declared that he meant to save the Union as best he could—by preserving slavery, by destroying it, or by destroying part and preserving part. Just after the Battle of Antietam (Sept. 17, 1862) he issued his **proclamation** calling on the revolted states to return to their allegiance before the next year, otherwise their slaves would be declared free men. No state returned, and the threatened declaration was issued on Jan. 1, 1863.

As president, Lincoln could issue no such declaration; as commander in chief of the armies and navies of the United States he could issue directions only as to the territory within his lines; but the **Emancipation Proclamation** applied only to territory outside of his lines. It has therefore been debated whether the **proclamation** was in reality of any force. It may fairly be taken as an announcement of the policy that was to guide the army and as a declaration of freedom taking effect as the lines advanced.

Its international importance was far greater. The locking up of the world's source of cotton supply had been a general calamity, and the Confederate government and people had steadily expected that the English and French governments would intervene in the war. The conversion of the struggle into a crusade against slavery made European

intervention impossible.

The ***Emancipation Proclamation*** did more than lift the war to the level of a crusade for human freedom. It brought some substantial practical results, because it allowed the Union to recruit African American soldiers. To this invitation to join the army the African Americans responded in great numbers; nearly 180,000 of them enlisting during the remainder of the war. By Aug. 26, 1863, Lincoln could report, in a letter to James C. Conkling, that “***the emancipation policy, and the use of colored troops, constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion.***”

Two months before the war ended—in February 1865—Lincoln told portrait painter Francis B. Carpenter that the ***Emancipation Proclamation*** was “***the central act of my administration, and the greatest event of the nineteenth century.***” To Lincoln and to his countrymen it had become evident that the proclamation had dealt a deathblow to slavery in the United States, a fate that was officially sealed by the ratification of the **Thirteenth Amendment** in December 1865.

JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth, the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery has been celebrated by African Americans for over 135 years. It was on June 19, 1865, (***Juneteenth***) when many of slaves in the state of Texas first learned that they had been freed.

The ***Emancipation Proclamation*** went into effect on January 1, 1863, however, it was not until General Granger of the Union Army arrived in Texas in 1865 that many of the slaves were informed that they had already been emancipated for over two years.

As the news spread throughout Texas, African Americans celebrated. Festive foods were prepared, music and games were played, stories were told, and people danced and sang.

From its Galveston, Texas origin in 1865, the observance of June 19th as the African American Emancipation Day has spread across the United States and beyond. The celebration commemorates freedom with an emphasis on education and achievement.

Today, ***Juneteenth*** is celebrated across the country and the throughout the world as a day of, (and in some areas as a week or month long) celebration, rejoicing and reflection.

The Emancipation Proclamation - Abraham Lincoln - 1862

Whereas on the 22nd day of September, A.D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for

their actual freedom.

"That the executive will on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-In-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the first day above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Palquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebone, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that, in all case when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

Sources:

[Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

[Encyclopedia Africana](#)

[World Book Encyclopedia](#)

National Archives and Records Administration
Juneteenth.com