



DID YOU KNOW...?

Juneteenth is a state holiday

There's more than one Independence Day in the U.S. On June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and announced enslaved people were now free. Since then, June 19 has been celebrated as Juneteenth across the nation.

The June 19 announcement came more than two and a half years after Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. But the news had not reached the 250,000 enslaved people in Texas.

General Order No. 3, as read by General Granger, said, in part, that "The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages." Most freed people weren't terribly interested in staying with the people who had enslaved them, even if pay was involved. In fact, some were leaving before Granger had finished making the announcement. What followed became known as "the scatter," when droves of former enslaved people left the state to find family members or more welcoming accommodations in northern regions. But when freed people tried to leave, many of them were beaten, lynched, or murdered.

When those who remained tried to celebrate the first anniversary of the announcement a year later, they were faced with a problem: segregation laws were expanding rapidly, and there were no public places or parks they were permitted to use. So, in the 1870s, former enslaved people pooled together \$800 and purchased 10 acres of land, which they deemed "Emancipation Park." It was the only public park and swimming pool in the Houston area open to African Americans until 1950s.

Juneteenth celebrations waned for several decades, not because people no longer wanted to celebrate freedom—but, "it's difficult to celebrate freedom when your life is defined by oppression on all sides." Celebrations waned until the civil rights movement of the 1960s, when the Poor People's March planned by Martin Luther King Jr. was purposely scheduled to coincide with the date. The march brought Juneteenth back to the forefront, and when march participants took the celebrations back to their home states, the holiday was reborn. The state of Texas deemed the holiday worthy of statewide recognition in 1980, becoming the first state to do so.

The Juneteenth flag shown above is full of symbolism. Flag designer L.J. Graf packed lots of meaning into her design. The colors red, white, and blue echo the American flag to symbolize that the enslaved people and their descendants were Americans. The star in the middle pays homage to Texas, while the bursting "new star" on the "horizon" of the red and blue fields represents a new freedom and a new people.

Excerpted from <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/501680/12-things-you-might-not-know-about-juneteenth>.



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Work starting on Ronnei-Raum House

You may have noticed the banner on the Ronnei-Raum House, next to the Masonic Hall. This small cottage is the first project approved by the Preservation Action Fund, created by 4Culture, Executive Dow Constantine and the King County Council. The Fund offers a unique process, designed to make possible a long string of impactful projects throughout the County. Each project involves the purchase of a property, acquiring King County Landmark status for it, investing in the complex renovations needed to return it to its historic condition, then selling the protected property and returning the money to the Fund.

The research by architectural historian Sarah Martin, to complete the King County Landmark process in 2019, showed that the home was built circa 1904 by George Hamlin. It had several owners even before it was purchased in 1909 by Andrew and Karen Ronnei, the owners of Hotel Fall City. It does not appear that they lived in the house—it may have been a rental. In 1916 they built a residence at another location. Upon their sudden death in December 1918 due to the influenza pandemic, the King County Superior Court appointed Andrew's brother Christ Ronnei to be administrator of the estate. The home was purchased from the estate by Hans O. Raum, a young nephew of Karen Ronnei. He sold it soon thereafter to his older brother Christ Raum. Christ does not seem to have lived in the house, but he owned it until the early 1950s, and it was sold several more times before the Fall City Masonic Lodge acquired the property in 1965. The Preservation Action Fund purchased the property from the Lodge in 2019, ending their lengthy 54-year stewardship. Work has begun with the installation of a new septic system.

The banner above shows the four groups who are partners with the Preservation Action Fund. Historic Seattle is the “boots on the ground” partner, responsible for acquiring, landmarking, rehabilitating, and selling the property.

Stay tuned next month for possible new developments with this project!

Support for our work from King County Heritage 4Culture is gratefully acknowledged.

