2024 JUNETEENTH IN APPALACHIA

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If you would like to have your community event included in this list, please contact Marie at marie@blackappalachiancoalition.org

Overview

In 2016, retired educator Ms. Opal Lee set out on a mission to make Juneteenth a national holiday. Read the Story of the "Grandmother of Juneteenth." On June 17th, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law, establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

"Juneteenth celebrates a belated liberation. Enslaved people in the Confederacy who didn't manage to escape across Union lines or find themselves in "occupied territory" were not all made free by Lincoln's proclamation and had to wait until the end of the Civil War to take their first free breaths. In many ways, Juneteenth represents how freedom and justice in the US have always been delayed for black people." — From an essay titled, "The Quintessential Americanness of Juneteenth.

History & Context

Many enslavers, especially those from Louisiana and Mississippi, refugeed, or hid their slaves in Texas to keep them from Union forces. Enslavers refused to emancipate their slaves or acknowledge that the war was over. Union Brigadier General Gordon Granger and 1,800 federal troops arrived off the coast of Galveston in mid-June 1865. Though many enslaved people had already learned through the "grapevine telegraph" and from African American dockworkers and U.S. Colored Troops that they were free. On June 19, 1865, Granger made news of freedom official. He stepped onto the balcony of Ashton Villa, the former headquarters of the Texas Confederate Army, and read General Orders No. 3. — excerpted from Why Juneteenth Matters by Shennette Garrett-Scott for ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History)

Black Union Soldiers

"Once they let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship." —Frederick Douglass

Roughly 200,000 Black men enlisted among the Union ranks in the months before Confederate General Robert E Lee surrendered at Appomattox, Virginia on April 9, 1865.

Liberation finally reached the edges of the U.S. western frontier on June 19, 1865, when some 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. Many formerly enslaved soldiers were among their ranks. They marched onto plantations and across cities, reading small copies of the Emancipation Proclamation, spreading the news, and enforcing the law. Only through the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was chattel slavery officially ended throughout the United States.

Historical Highlight: The Story of The Kingdom of the Happy Land, North Carolina

The Kingdom of the Happy Land was a Black communal society in Western North Carolina during Reconstruction. Nestled in the valleys and ridges along Lake Summit near the small town of Tuxedo, North Carolina, The Kingdom embodied a larger history of Black, rural place-making and an early vision for Black settlement in the southern mountains. According to *The Kingdom of the Happy Land,* published by Sadie Smathers Patton, it reigned for roughly 50 years, from the 1860s to the 1910s.

Self-Determination & Juneteenth: Freeing Ourselves

Slave-era Rebellions

- Harper's Ferry Black Heritage Tour (WV)
- https://facebook.com/events/s/harpers-ferry-black-heritage-g/1433645943945707/
- Underground Railroad sites in Appalachia

Black Soldiers in the U.S. Military During the Civil War

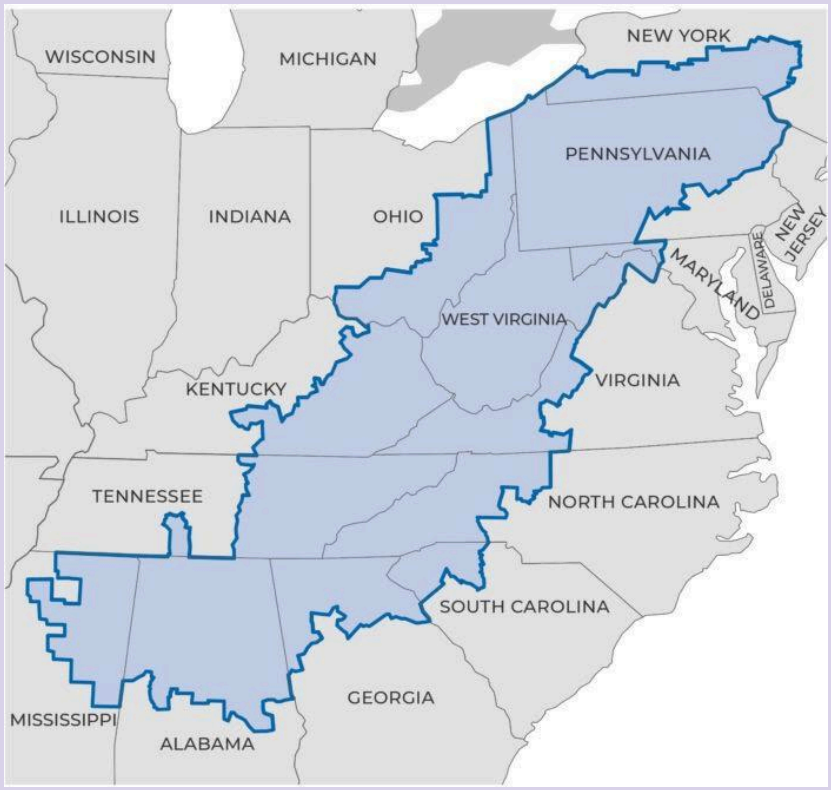
The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.
Juneteenth Digital Toolkit

SELF-AFFIRMATION: Juneteenth Celebrations Around the Region

2024 Juneteenth Celebrations in Appalachia, compiled and curated by BLAC Narrative Organizer, Marie T.Cochran

We have included events that are:

- Celebratory and Educational
- Black and grassroots-led and/or in partnership with municipalities and other organizations
- Established before the Federally-designated Juneteenth Holiday (2021)



Appalachia is a mountainous region in the eastern United States that stretches from New York to Mississippi. It includes the Appalachian Mountains, divided into three sections: northern, central, and southern. The region is known for its diverse landscapes, which include rolling hills, wooded areas, and river valleys.

It stretches from the western Catskill Mountains of New York state into Pennsylvania, continuing through the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Great Smoky Mountains into northern Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.

ALABAMA

June 19 - Tuskegee, AL Juneteenth Celebration" Bridging the Great Divide," on Town Square presented by The City of Tuskegee and Tuskegee University

GEORGIA

June 15 - Gainesville, GA presented by The Gainesville-Hall County Black Historical Society

June 15 - Toccoa, GA presented by the Toccoa Improvement Association in partnership with Mainstreet Toccoa as part of the Ida Cox Summer Music Series.

June 22 - Cartersville, GA presented by the Summer Hill Heritage Group, Summer Hill Complex

KENTUCKY

June 14 - Harrodsburg, KY Heart Of K.Y. Juneteenth Celebration (juneteenthky.com)

June 15 - Hopkinsville, KY Juneteenth Celebration, 15 June | Event in Hopkinsville | AllEvents.in

June 15 - Lexington, KY SOULTEENTH FEST | SoulFeast Week Moondance Amphitheater

June 15 - Lexington, KY, 19th Annual Juneteenth Jubilee at African Cemetery #2, 419 E. Seventh Street highlights the spirit of freedom and honors the Black Civil War soldiers

June 15 - Midway, KY Juneteenth Freedom Festival: A Likely Story Milan Bush will be in conversation with Affrilachian Poet Crystal Wilkinson, author of the acclaimed book, Praisesong for the Kitchen Ghosts.

June 19 - Versailles, KY 5th Annual Juneteenth Freedom Celebration and the Grand Opening of the New Downtown Pavilion and Stage featuring legendary blues musician Tee Dee Young.

June 22 - Somerset, KY Lake Cumberland Juneteenth Jubilee presented by the Lake Cumberland Diversity Collective at the Lake Cumberland Slaves Memorial on Somerset Community College Campus in Pulaski County, Kentucky

NORTH CAROLINA

June 12 - June 20, Asheville, NC “Celebrating the History and the Legacy of Juneteenth,” MLK Association of Asheville and Buncombe County in partnership with the City of Asheville (full schedule at website)

Juneteenth Celebrations across WNC

June 15 - Lake Junaluska, NC Open-air Nanci Weldon Memorial Gym. A partnership between the Western North Carolina NAACP, Martin Luther King, Jr., Committee, Pigeon Community Multicultural Development Center, First United Methodist in Waynesville and Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center.

June 15, Murphy, NC, Texana Community Center

June 19 - Sylva, NC Juneteenth & Pride Celebration Potluck at Bridge Park sponsored by Cornbread & Roses Counseling Services

OHIO

June 15 - Ironton, OH The Ohio Southern Culture & Heritage Festival | Ohio University is a nine-county, three-state initiative to locate and document Underground Railroad sites in the tri-state region of Ohio, Kentucky, and West VA.

PENNSYLVANIA

June 14 - 16 Pittsburgh, PA Juneteenth Celebration presented by the City of Pittsburgh

June 15 - Pittsburgh, PA Juneteenth Grant Jubilee Parade re-enacting events of 1870

June 19 - Indiana, PA Annual Juneteenth Commemoration and Cookout Celebration at Mack Park, sponsored by Indiana County, PA NAACP in collaboration with First Commonwealth Bank and Comcast, Inc.

SOUTH CAROLINA

June 14, 15 & 19 - Greenville, SC, Largest Juneteenth Celebration in State of SC

June 19 - Clemson, SC, Juneteenth Celebration and the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 presented by Clemson Area African American Museum

TENNESSEE

June 19 - Knoxville, TN Beck Cultural Exchange Center designated by the state as a primary repository of Black history and culture in East Tennessee.

June 10 - Kingsport, TN - Juneteenth Lunch & Learn join the Juneteenth Planning Committee in the Douglass Room at V.O. Dobbins Sr. Complex

June 19 - Kingsport, TN - Juneteenth Community Celebration

June 19 - Johnson City, TN Juneteenth Brunch, Langston Centre

June 15 - 21 Chattanooga, TN - Juneteenth Festival presented by Festivals of Black Arts & Ideas are ongoing, multi-day, and multi-disciplinary festivals celebrating Black arts throughout the year.

Month of June - Johnson City, TN Fischman Gallery presents "Artistic Expressions of Wealth and Prosperity" a month-long Juneteenth exhibition in partnership with Umoja Arts and Culture.

VIRGINIA

June 19 - Orange, Virginia, African American Commemorative Park, “Faith to Freedom” Orange County African American Historical Society, Carter Farms, Africulture, and The Arts Center in Orange

June 23 - Big Stone Gap, VA - Italy Bottom Park Juneteenth Celebration, organizer SAP (Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards)

WEST VIRGINIA

June 16 - 19 Wheeling, WV Juneteenth Celebration theme "Our Ancestors' Wildest Dreams” including A Taste of Tradition: Soul Food Cook-Off and Film Screening, Juneteenth Lunch With Books Featuring "Appalachian Ghost: A Photographic Reimagining of the Hawk's Nest Tunnel Disaster" by Raymond Thompson Jr. published by University Press of Kentucky, Juneteenth Community mural Project by local artist Vondel Bell, and the Wheeling-Area Juneteenth Ceremony and Celebration at Wheeling Heritage Port

