

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

As many Juneteenth celebrations began over the past weekend across the country, the month offers several learning opportunities. See the links below for several free activities taking place locally in West Chester, as well as across Chester County:

- [Reenactment, Freedom Walk, Juneteenth Meal and Jubilee](#)- June 19, 2024 beginning at 12 noon at the Old Courthouse, High Street and Market Street, West Chester PA and concluding at Milestone Events. ([Event Flyer](#))
- [Cultural Alliance of Chester County](#)- Juneteenth Commemorations (Coatesville, Kennett Square, Phoenixville, and West Chester) Events take place June 14-22, 2024
- [Chester County History Center](#)- Records Roundup: Slavery and Servitude, A Look in the Archives. June 27, 2024
- [Walking Tours](#)- The Underground Railroad of West Chester, June 19-29, 2024



About the Holiday:

As West Chester University, along with colleagues across the Pennsylvania System of Higher Education prepare to observe the “*Juneteenth*” holiday on Wednesday, consider ways you can celebrate at home or in your community. Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States and serves as the only holiday that commemorates the abolition of slavery. In 2019, Governor Tom Wolf signed a law designating June 19th as “Juneteenth National Freedom Day” in Pennsylvania. On June 17, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law, making it a federal holiday. As a community of educators, we recognize that Juneteenth provides an opportunity for enlightenment on the fight for freedom and independence well after July 4, 1776.



History of Juneteenth:

Juneteenth (short for “June Nineteenth”) marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops’ arrival came a full two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House two months earlier in Virginia, but slavery had remained relatively unaffected in Texas—until U.S. General Gordon Granger stood on Texas soil and read General Orders No. 3: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.” (Taken from <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth>)