

# City Residents

## Planning First-Ever Juneteenth Festival

SAT FEB 17 2001

By INEZ ALSTON

February as **Black History Month** seems to be the perfect time to make an announcement of an important event in June 2001, which will be the first Juneteenth Celebration in the city of Jamestown.

Juneteenth has come to mean for many African-Americans what the Fourth of July symbolizes for all Americans — freedom. It is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on Sept. 22, 1862, many counties, states and parishes had been excluded from learning about it.

So June 19, 1865, is considered the date when the last slaves in America were freed. That is recorded as the date when Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger of the Union Army rode into Galveston, Texas, and issued General Order Number 3 that all slaves had been freed. This was nearly 2 ½ years after Lincoln's proclamation.

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## Juneteenth: 'Pride Parade' On June 15 Will Start Festivities

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It is recorded that when blacks in Texas heard the news they sang, danced and prayed. There was much jubilation and rejoicing that their lifelong prayers had been answered. Now, annually, on June 19 more than 200 cities acknowledge the occasion with celebrations last-

ing from one day to a week.

Since September, a committee chaired by Vickye James and Richard Fleurant has been meeting to plan the first Juneteenth Celebration. Mark on your calendars the dates Friday, June 15, to Sunday, June 17. The celebration will begin at 6 p.m. with "A Pride Parade" starting

at the Third Street bridge and ending at Tracy Plaza. The traditional Emancipation prayer will be followed by a talk on the meaning of Juneteenth. Entertainment by area youth groups will follow.

On June 16, a fun day, entitled "Family Reunion on Cultures" will include vendors, a

barbecue, softball games, games for children and many other activities. Sunday's program will commence with a community breakfast, followed by a community church service.

History books have told only a small part of the story. A Juneteenth Celebration will help to set the record straight.