

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera Juneteenth commemorates the freeing of Texas slaves

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The Bandera Prophet

The third annual Bandera Juneteenth recognition was celebrated June 15, honoring the day in 1865, when 250,000 Texas slaves were freed. Held at the Bertha Tryon/Hendrick Arnold Cemetery and hosted by the Bandera County Historical Commission, the Frontier Times Museum, and the Silver Sage Hill Country Resource Center, the San Antonio Mass Choir opened ceremonies with the National Anthem and Black National Anthem.

After an introduction by Bandera Mayor Rebeca Gibson, USAF Veteran Larry Jackson delivered excerpts from the Emancipation Proclamation, followed by an a capella performance from Houston resident Gayle Waden, and an original poetry recitation by DaRell Pittman. Bandera High School Freshman Abigail Sizemore read aloud her contest-winning essay on the importance of traditions in our culture and history.

The free community event concluded with fellowship, food, and the Laying of the Wreath by Larry and Suzanne Jackson.

~ On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, announcing the Emancipation Proclamation, issued two years prior by President Abraham Lincoln, on Jan. 1, 1863. The proclamation was not honored by Confederate states until enforced by the advancement of Union troops. Texas was the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery.

The first Juneteenth celebrations were held in Texas in 1866, on the anniversary of General Granger's announcement. In 1979, Governor William P. Clements signed an act making the day a state holiday. In 2021, President Joseph Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into federal law.

~ The Bertha Tryon/Hendrick Arnold Cemetery, formerly known as the Black Cemetery, was established in 1922. During segregation, the Montague family donated land for the county's black community to bury their dead, since they were not allowed to use the city cemetery. The Black Cemetery was forgotten until 1993, when Bandera resident Buddy Tryon requested permission to bury his wife Bertha there. The Bandera County Historical Commission then undertook a multi-year restoration project to clear the weed-ridden cemetery, locate gravesites, and place stone markers upon those found.

The names of the interred, read aloud by Anna Montague, include Mary E. Arnold, Leonor Benson, John Benson, John Coats, Jeff Cooksey, Jeff Cooksey, Jr., C.D. Cooksey, Baby Cooksey, A.H. Hubble, Maria Jackson, Mary Jackson, Andrew Jackson, Amanda Lee, D.W. Leonard, Mrs. S.F. McClung, Elizabeth Moore, Joseph Moore, Mrs. William Moore, Martha A. Phillips, Everett Robinson, Mary Ethel Taylor, Bertha Mae Tryon, Wife of Jim Walker, and Wellencrane.

The Bertha Tryon/Hendrick Arnold Cemetery is located off Hwy. 16, on Old Medina Highway and Houston Street.