

Each year, the federal holiday Juneteenth (celebrated on June 19) celebrates the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was designed to eradicate slavery from the United States. Often hailed as the longest-running African American holiday, Juneteenth dates back to June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger of the Union Army arrived in Galveston, Texas, to deliver the final execution of the Emancipation Proclamation, which had initially gone into effect more than two years prior.

Today, Juneteenth is celebrated not only to commemorate the end of slavery in the U.S. but also to increase awareness of Black and African American excellence throughout history. In Auburn and Cayuga County, where Harriet Tubman lived for the final 50+ years of her life, Juneteenth events are truly a sight to behold and often stretch throughout the month of June. In fact, celebrations of the holiday are so robust that Auburn was named one of the 13 best places to celebrate Juneteenth last year in 2023.

This June, there are countless ways to celebrate Juneteenth and to educate ourselves on Black history:

- **Music on the Mall featuring The Frank White Experience:** On Friday, June 14th from 7-10pm, State Street's free Music on the Mall concert series will feature The Frank White Experience, a live band tribute to the "Notorious B.I.G." Nearby restaurants, bars, and breweries will offer food and drink specials all night long.
- **Booker T. Washington Community Center's Juneteenth Celebration:** Featuring local vendors, food trucks, music, and kid-friendly activities, this celebration is perfect for the whole family! The event will kick off at 11am for the City Hall Opening Ceremony & Juneteenth Proclamation, followed by a parade from City Hall to the Booker T. Washington Community Center, where the celebrations will run from 12-6:30pm.
- **Miss Juneteenth Pageantry Program Crowning:** The Miss Juneteenth Pageantry Program is a unique experience for Black girls nationwide. This program aims to

showcase the inherent beauty and talent of these young ladies, while also minimizing stereotypes; helping them to develop a sense of self-confidence and pride; and deepening understanding of Black history and culture. On June 15, this year's Miss Juneteenth will be crowned at the Booker T. Washington Community Center.

- **Donnell Rawlings Comedy Show:** On June 15, the Auburn Public Theater will be hosting comedian Donnell Rawlings (known for his work with Dave Chapelle and his new Netflix comedy special) for a night of laughs.
- **Juneteenth Celebrations at Lavish Lounge:** On June 21, Lavish Lounge Bar & Restaurant will be hosting its 21+ Juneteenth celebration, featuring live music from Dashé and MP3 Band, as well as DJ Big Red.
- **Womba Africa Drumming and Dance Group:** On Sunday, June 23, Womba Africa will be sharing the culture of Ghana through dance and music at the Historic Willard Memorial Chapel. All costumes, instruments, rhythms, dances, and songs originate from West Africa, where the group is from.