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Galveston reenacts Juneteenth

written by David Card

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On June 19 in Galveston, Texas, a Juneteenth reenactment march to the county courthouse started at Reedy Chapel AME Church. Galveston is the birthplace of Juneteenth, which celebrates the beginning of the enforcement of the end of slavery in Texas and is now a federal holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.

At the courthouse, “General Orders No. 3” was read. Issued in 1865, the order declared that all enslaved peoples in Texas were free. That was over two and a half

years after the Emancipation Proclamation had legally freed them. The Emancipation Proclamation was finally enforced by thousands of Black soldiers who had fled slavery and joined the Union Army.

After hearing the order read at the Galveston courthouse, the jubilant crowd marched back to Reedy Chapel, singing songs such as “Which Side Are You On?” and “We Shall Not Be Moved.”

At the church, a program was held featuring a descendant of a church member from the original Juneteenth and the city mayor and a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation by a community member. Speeches highlighted the fights for absolute equality that came before and the necessity to continue the struggle.

SLL photos: David Card

