



Proclamation

Town of Mansfield, Connecticut

WHEREAS, the United States of America, in declaring its independence on July 4, 1776, proclaimed “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”; and

WHEREAS, despite this proclamation, millions of individuals of African descent were held in bondage in these lands, constituting a grave crime against humanity; and

WHEREAS, the abolitionist leader and former slave Frederick Douglass spoke to white Americans of the Fourth of July holiday: “I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn...;” and

WHEREAS, slavery was practiced in Connecticut until finally precluded by law in 1848; and

WHEREAS, slavery was practiced in Mansfield into the 19th century; and

WHEREAS, among those enslaved in Mansfield were Titus, son of Tobias and Peg, who worked as a blacksmith, butcher, and tanner, and enlisted to serve the cause of independence during the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, Titus contributed his forced and uncompensated labor to the development of the Town of Mansfield and the enrichment of Shubael Conant, his enslaver, whose family name is prominently commemorated in the Town of Mansfield; and

WHEREAS, Titus has remained unrecognized in the Town of Mansfield until the research of teachers and students at Mansfield Middle School led to the placement of a Witness Stone bearing Titus name at the Mansfield Library on June 10, 2022, and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, providing for that all persons held as slaves in all parts of the Confederacy “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free;” and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, the final Confederate state in rebellion, and declared: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property, between former masters and slaves and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor;” and

WHEREAS, in 1866, Texans began marking the Juneteenth holiday with community gatherings and events, such as parades, religious services, speeches and readings, cookouts, and music; and

WHEREAS, communities around the country have increasingly adopted the 19th day of June as “Juneteenth Independence Day” to celebrate the end of chattel slavery and the resilience of the African American community; and

WHEREAS, the Connecticut General Assembly has directed the Governor to observe Juneteenth Independence Day since 2003; and

WHEREAS, in issuing the Proclamation recognizing Juneteenth Independence Day in 2020, Governor Ned Lamont stated, “Simply recognizing a day and educating people about our country’s history is not enough. We must do more. We must take action to reach the goal of a more equal and just society;” and

WHEREAS, the Town of Mansfield has recognized its responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all residents, and to promote equity and racial justice.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT:

- 1) That the 19th of June, 2022 be declared Juneteenth Independence Day.
- 2) That on or around June 19, 2022, the Town of Mansfield will support events that commemorate and celebrate of the end of African slavery in Mansfield, Connecticut, and the United States of America,
- 3) That the Town of Mansfield directs the Town Manager to continue to work with Town departments, the Human Rights Commission, and other stakeholders—including, but not limited to, scholars, historians, community leaders, and human rights activists—to develop activities and events to commemorate and celebrate Juneteenth Independence Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and caused the seal of the Town of Mansfield to be affixed on this 23rd day of May in the year 2022.



Antonia Moran, Mayor
Town of Mansfield
May 23, 2022