

In this heartfelt reflection, Margie Ball-Cook, PhD, FNP, RN, shares her personal connection to Juneteenth, shedding light on the enduring impact of delayed freedom on her ancestors and the African American community. Her poignant words serve as a reminder of the long-lasting psychosocial effects of slavery.

“I grew up in Galveston, Texas, where federal troops arrived to occupy Galveston when Granger issued General Orders No. 3, which came to be called the Juneteenth Order, that liberated 250,000 enslaved Black people in Texas. Texas was the last stop for Union troops who had been marching across the Confederate South and freeing slaves as they went. My ancestors, the Ball family, were told that slavery had ended three years prior to the Juneteenth Order. I cannot imagine what my elders were thinking. It was bad enough to be brought to America against their will and then to not given your freedom until three years after all other enslaved people were freed. Thinking about how this affected my ancestors and the other 250,000 individuals who were at the mercy of unkind Caucasians, the mental agony they endured is profound and has moved down through generations. Many of us Blacks are still experiencing the lingering effects of slavery in the form of mental health challenges like depression and other disorders, which contribute to ongoing conflict between Americans”